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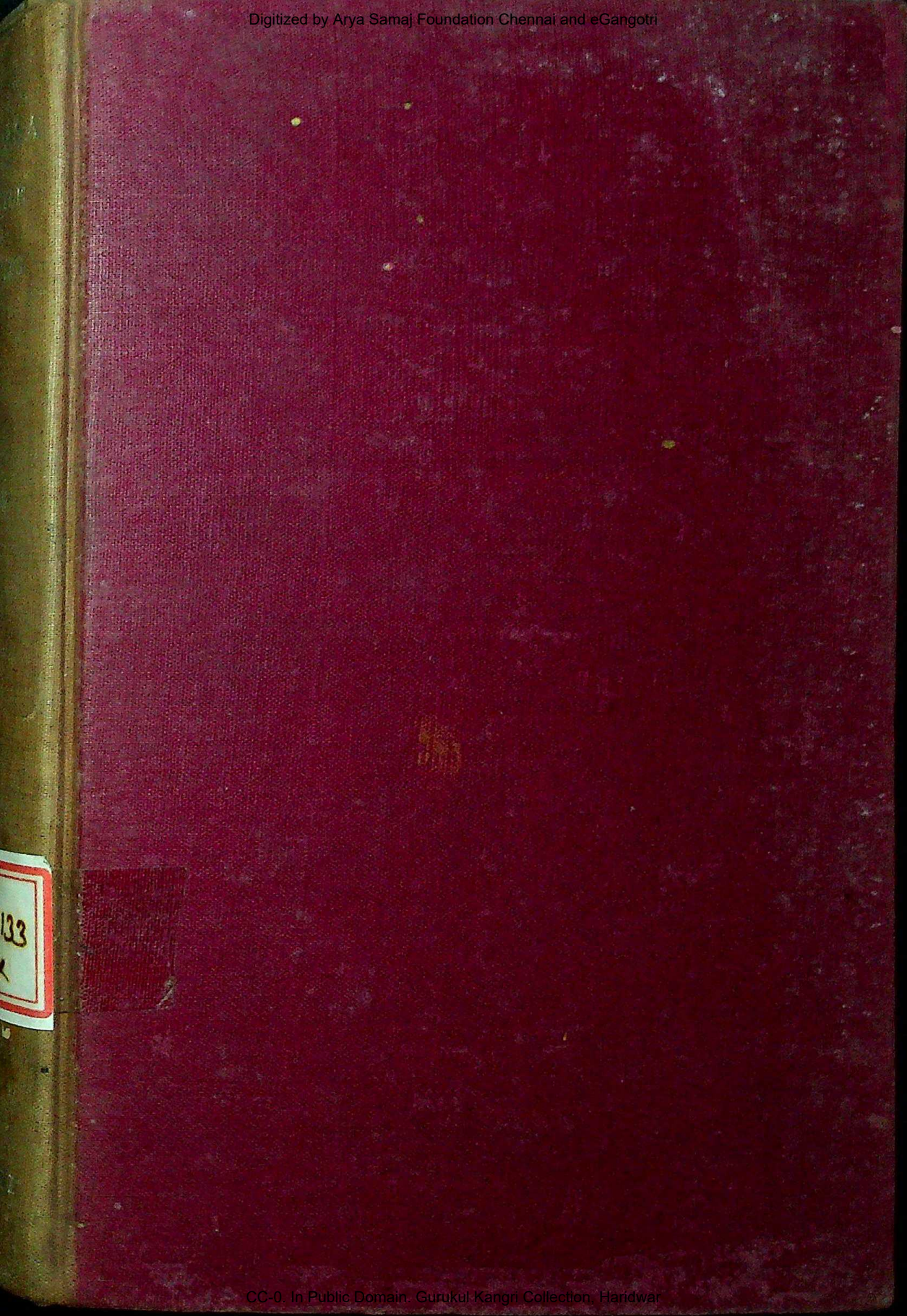

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HIS STYLE AND HIS TIMES

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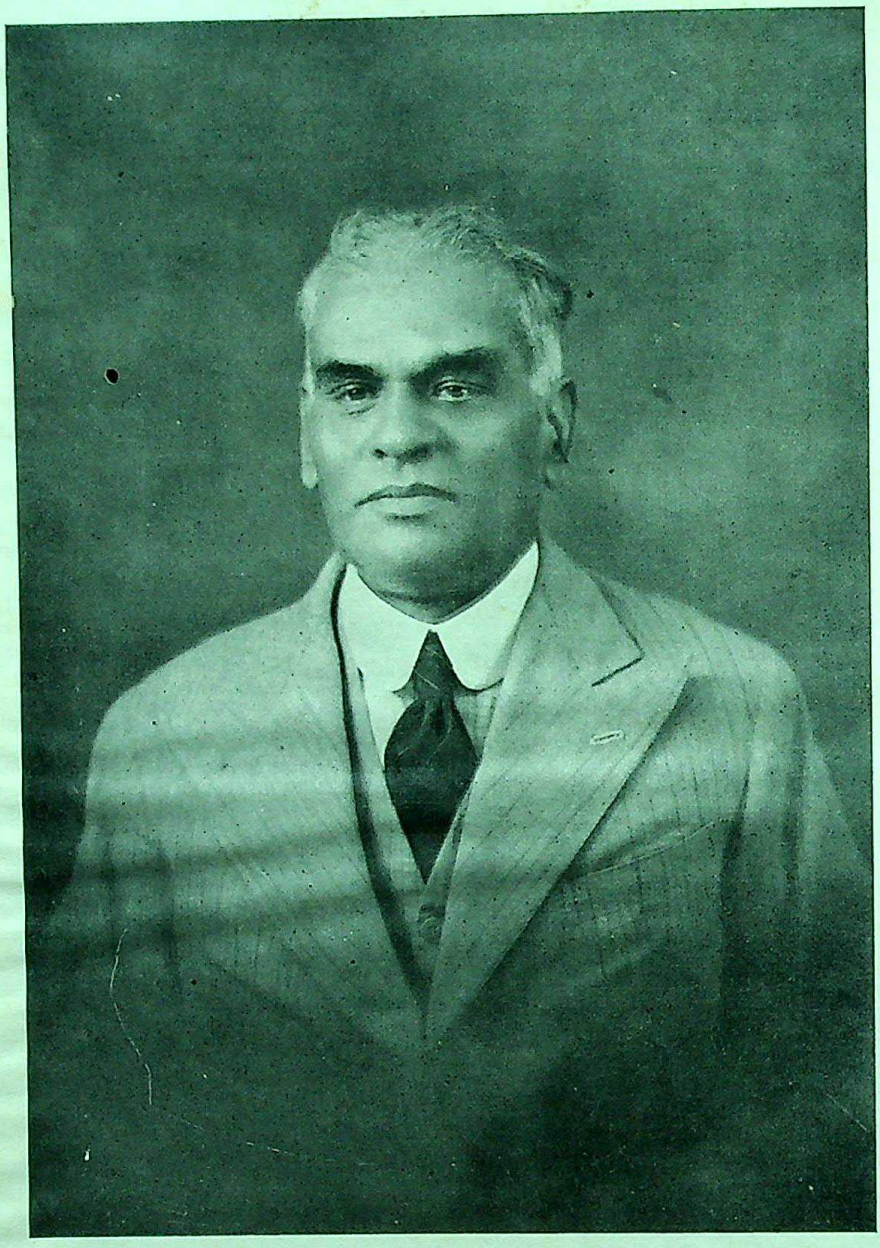

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KĀLIDĀSA

HIS STYLE AND HIS TIMES

by

S. A. SABNIS
B.A., LL.B., *Solicitor*

1973

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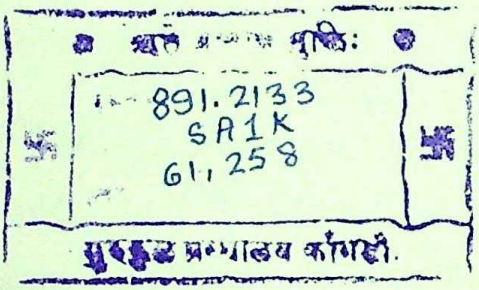
By the same author

Health, Strength & Longevity (and how to achieve them)
रत्नावली नाटिका (सरळ समवृत्त मराठी भाषांतर)
महाराष्ट्र मेघदूत (सरळ समवृत्त मराठी भाषांतर)



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Published by

A. S. Pandya
N. M. Tripathi Private Ltd.
164, Princess Street, Bombay 2

Printed by

V. P. Bhagwat
Mouj Printing Bureau
Khatau Wadi, Bombay 4

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PREFACE

सर्वथा व्यवहर्तव्यं कुतो ह्यवचनीयता ।
यथा स्त्रीणां तथा वाचां साधुत्वे दुर्जनो जनः ॥

—*Uttararāmacarita* I. 5

This treatise is the result of a close, loving and unremitting association for a number of years with the literary masterpieces of Kālidāsa which along with the works of Bhavabhūti and others have claimed my allegiance from the early years of adolescence and whose fascination for me has gone on increasing so that in my declining years they have become my chief solace and intellectual and spiritual nourishment. The extensive notes made by me during all this time from the Kālidāsian literature have been carefully collated and arranged in an attractive and compendious form and the result is this book which I have great pleasure in offering to the lovers and students of the Sanskrit language in the earnest hope that it may help them to realize, assess and appreciate the Himalayan heights of the poetical and linguistic genius of this brilliant dramatist and poet of world-wide reputation.

I may state here once for all that I lay no claim either to deep scholarship or original research which is beyond my reach owing to the exigencies of my exacting professional work. I am writing for the benefit and delectation of literary lotus-eaters, if I may be permitted to call them so, who merely crave for the honey and the perfume of the flower leaving to more robust intellects and greater leisure to deal with its inevitable thorns. I have therefore as far as possible avoided laborious and intricate incursions into vexed questions regarding the date or birth-place of Kālidāsa and other disputed questions which arise in connection with his ancient writings. These have been sufficiently belaboured and explored by other scholars and savants whose conclusions for what they are worth have been referred to in this volume in the proper places.

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The general impression—I may even call it a prejudice —which prevails among some of those whose acquaintance with the work of this poet is more or less superficial, is that he is par excellence an exponent of Śṛṅgāra (the erotic sentiment) and his writings mainly if not wholly are devoted to the portraiture of the human erotic passion or sex psychology in its various phases and manifestations. Nothing, however, is farther from the truth or likely to do greater injustice to him. Although Kālidāsa is a master craftsman in the delineation of sex passion, on closer examination it will be found that only a small portion of his writings is dedicated to descriptions of mere erotic dalliance.

Take the case of the two famous Mahākāvyas of Kālidāsa. In *Raghuvaṁśa* except in the last canto (XIX) and in *Kumārasambhava* except Canto VIII the remaining portion of these epic compositions is almost free from the erotic complex. In *Śākuntala* in the first three Acts it is not possible to avoid the incidence of *Śṛṅgāra*, but it must be admitted to the credit of our poet that he has dealt with the love episodes therein with such commendable and artistic restraint that even a prudish and puritanical person can find nothing therein to offend against his supersensitiveness. The remaining Acts of the drama deal with the sublimation and purification of mere human sex passion and therein the luscious "fruits of the year's decline" are offered to the readers as distinguished from the "young year's blossoms". In *Vikramorvaśīya* which is a kind of light musical comedy with a very poor plot, the heroine being a celestial courtezan, the poet mostly indulges in an unrestrained bout of Vipralambhaśṛṅgāra and makes free use of his favourite poetical stunts as in the case of Bhavabhūti in Act IX of *Mālatīmādhava*. *Mālavikāgnimitra* is mainly taken up with harem intrigues with the exception of a very short love scene in Act III, although the sentiment of love and romance runs like a fine thread throughout the play. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* is in essence a nature poem profusely interwoven and replenished with hedonistic and sensuous touches. *Meghadūta* is chiefly concerned with the

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description of the agonies of separated lovers (Vipralambhaśṛṅgāra) which is inherent in the plot and a large part of the work is taken up with brilliant descriptions of cities, rivers and mountains.

Kālidāsa in his poetical works deals with almost every topic of human interest including of course the sentiment of love. In *Raghuvaṁśa* he deals with state-craft and the duties of an ideal king. His works are also replete with metaphysical and philosophic disquisitions. Aphorisms and precious words of worldly wisdom are disseminated throughout their entire range especially by means of the Arthāntaranyāsa figure of speech. His descriptions of military campaigns and warfare although wanting in the grandeur and resounding effect characteristic of Bhavabhūti's style, give sufficient information about the martial equipments and mode of warfare in ancient India. His handling of the topography of India in *Raghuvaṁśa* and *Meghadūta* may not be geographically impeccable but it gives a general idea of the dynasties which ruled in different parts of the Indian continent and of the cities which stood conspicuous in wealth and political importance at or before the commencement of the Christian era. I have made it clear (see Chapter XX) that the poet has no pretensions either to historical veracity or even geographical accuracy and has subordinated these considerations either to the requirements of epic poetry or the exigencies of his poetical moods or fancies.

His dialogues excel in dialectic and forensic skill (see Canto II of *Raghuvaṁśa* and Canto V of *Kumārasambhava*). His panegyrics of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śaṅkara are in the conventional and approved style. The grand morning hymn sung by the bards for the benefit of prince Aja at the end of Canto V of *Raghuvaṁśa*, however, is probably his highest watermark of phrase, fancy and rhythm and fully justifies the tradition that these verses are the handiwork of Sarasvatī the Goddess of Learning herself, composed by her and presented to her favourite poet.

It is therefore a libel to brand Kālidāsa as an exponent in the main of the art of amorous dalliance like Jayadeva of the *Gītagovinda* fame. If the sentiment of Śṛṅgāra

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(Love) is altogether eschewed from a poetical or dramatic composition, it will fail to attract support and patronage from a vast majority of the people. The case of the well-known dramatic composition *Mudrārākṣasa* is worth noting in this respect. The work as a literary piece is of a high order but it will be instructive to observe how rarely the drama has been staged and how few have read it except as a literary curiosity. It is not surprising therefore that poets like Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti who were anxious to push themselves into public notice gave sufficient scope to the erotic sentiment in their works.

I have supplied sufficient excerpts from the works of the poet as illustrative of the manifold fascinating features and facets of his voluminous writings. It is generally the fashion to give mere references but I have very little doubt that unless the appropriate quotations are available in extenso, the readers generally miss the pith and substance of the observations embodied in the work. Besides a large part of the quotations in this book have been carefully selected as providing excellent specimens illustrative of the matchless genius of the poet. This is perhaps the best way of popularizing and disseminating the love and appreciation of the Sanskrit language and of Sanskrit poets. For the above reason although it has somewhat added to the volume of the book, I have been designedly somewhat lavish in giving quotations in full when and where I thought it necessary.

Bombay
10th April 1964

S. A. Sabnis

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CHAPTER I

THE DATE OF KĀLIDĀSA

Kālidāsa has left no reliable trace of his personal life and family history or the period during which he lived and wrote. This has resulted in a vast field for speculation and controversy among scholars, litterateurs and savants and widely varying theories have been advanced from time to time which have made confusion worse confounded.

It is deeply felt that if some really reliable information about the time when the great poet lived, the social and political conditions and environments, cultural and literary atmosphere, his private family life, his contemporaries, were available, a still better appreciation of his wonderful literary achievements would have been possible.

The gloom and obscurity which encompasses Kālidāsa's life is however so profound that scholars, both Indian and European, in spite of colossal efforts, have been as yet unable to penetrate into and unravel the mystery, and various dates have been ascribed to him ranging from the 8th century B.C. to the 8th century A.D. !

I. M. Hippolyte Fauche has expressed his opinion that the poet lived in the 8th century B.C. He relies in support of his theory on the last verse of Canto XIX of *Raghu-vaṁśa* which refers to the crowning of the pregnant queen of Agnivarṇa after his premature demise. After Agnivarṇa many princes of the Raghu race have been enumerated in *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* and elsewhere.[1] It is therefore argued that the poet had to conclude his epic with Agnivarṇa, who happened to be his contemporary and that he must have therefore lived in or about the 8th century B.C.

1. Pp. 384-387 of *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa's* English translation by H. H. Wilson, 1840.

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Dr. Bhau Daji, Dr. Bhandarkar, Prof. Max Müller, R. C. Dutt and Weber are inclined to place him in the 6th century A.D.

Prof. Lassen places him during the period of the Gupta kings presumably in the reign of Samudra Gupta, who reigned from 330 to 380 A.D.

Sir William Jones, Prof. Bühler, Shri C. V. Vaidya think that the poet must have lived in the middle of the 2nd century B.C.

Some sort of tradition even makes him a contemporary of Bhavabhūti whose date has been more or less firmly fixed as the 8th century A.D.

Some suppose that he was a protégé of King Bhoja who lived in the 11th century A.D.!

Every possible argument based on archaeology, legend, tradition, numismatic evidence, astronomy, stone and pillar inscriptions, real or supposed internal evidence from the poet's writings, has been pressed into service by the numerous combatants in support of their respective theories and the controversy still goes on almost unabated.

It is not our intention to probe in detail into the pros and cons relating to the various theories hitherto put forward on this vexed question. A brief reference to them, however, can hardly be avoided.

It must be stated here at the outset that much of the difficulty on this question is due to the plurality of persons bearing certain famous and popular names and epithets at different times. The recurrence of names like Vikramāditya, Śilāditya, Lalitāditya, Harṣa, Śūdraka and Kālidāsa, is a marked phenomenon discernible throughout the entire range of ancient Sanskrit literature.

Another somewhat disturbing element is the undue reliance placed by some scholars on verses of dubious origin such as धन्वतरी क्षपणकोऽमरसिंहशङ्कु: etc. Some of the persons enumerated in the verse are removed from one another by many centuries! Amarasiṁha, the famous author of the versified Sanskrit Lexicon, is assigned to the first century B.C. while Varāhamihira, the distinguished astrologer, is

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said to have died in 587 A.D.!! The verse above referred to appears in an astrological work named *Jyotirvidābharaṇa* whose authorship is wrongly ascribed to Kālidāsa. S. P. Pandit rightly condemns this work as a "plagiaristic effort" and a "petty Jaina forgery". The work also decidedly bears the stamp of an inferior workmanship.

'Vikramāditya' appears to be more a title of honour than a proper name. There must have been a glorious monarch of great valour and magnificence whose name subsequently became a title of distinction and was therefore assumed by many great kings such as Candra Gupta II of the Gupta dynasty. Thus many Vikramādityas are found in ancient India from time to time.

(1) The first Vikramāditya is stated to be a king of the 'Āditya' or 'Pramāra' dynasty who ruled at Ujjain in about the first century B.C. He is reputed to have built the famous temple of Mahākāla at Ujjain and by defeating the Śakas (Scythians) founded the Saṁvat era in 57 B.C. He is mentioned in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* of Guṇādhya which is based on *Bṛhatkathā* of Somadeva.[2] This great king is believed to have had a long and glorious reign distinguished by the revival of Brahmanism and Brahmanical learning. He was a strong Śaivaite. It is noteworthy that Prof. Max Müller thinks *Kathāsaritsāgara* to be of as much historical weight as *Rājataraṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa. Both tradition and folklore, which are more tenacious in India than anywhere else, support the existence of this great monarch.

Reference to Vikramāditya of Ujjain who lived about the 1st century B.C. is said to occur in a composition by a Jaina author named Merutuṅgācārya. We have not been able to come across this work. In Vol. IX (old series) of the Journal of the Bombay Royal Asiatic Society (p. 139) reference is found to one Gandharvasena belonging to the Gardhabhil dynasty, who is said to have been deposed and exiled from his kingdom by one Kālikācarya with the aid

2. English translation of *Kathāsaritsāgara* by N. M. Penzar, Vol. VI, pp. 228-40; and also Vol. VII, p. 124.

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of the Scythians (Śakas) on account of a mortal insult given by the former to the latter's sister Sarasvatī. There was an interregnum of 7 years during which a Śaka king ruled at Ujjain until the Śakas were defeated and driven away by Vikramāditya the son of Gandharvasena who proved to be a king of great valour and glory.

Matsya-Purāṇa (Ch. CCLXXIII, p. 340) refers to Gardhabhil kings who, it is stated, ruled for 72 years and were seven in number.[3]

Viṣṇu-Purāṇa mentions 10 (ten) Gardhabhil kings.[4]

Very probably the opprobrious appellation of Gardhabhas or Gardhabhils was conferred on his illustrious dynasty by Jaina authors because these kings were strong Śaivaites and do not appear to have been in the good books of the Jainas. As a matter of fact, these kings belonged to the Pramāra or Āditya dynasty. The Vikramāditya of this dynasty, as stated before, founded the Saṁvat era in 57 B.C. Ferguson's fantastic theory that the Harṣa Vikramāditya who won the battle of Korur in 544 A.D. founded this era by throwing it back by 600 years is hardly worth any serious consideration.

In verse 125 of *Rājataraṅgiṇī* reference is made to a glorious Vikramāditya in the following words: "At that period, there lived at Ujjain as the sole sovereign of the world, the Vikramāditya who also bore the second name of Harṣa". Then follows the story of one Mātṛgupta, a poet who was placed on the throne of Kashmir by the said Vikramāditya. In the note to verse 125 at the bottom of the page[5] the translator remarks: "It is certain that Kalhaṇa himself saw in Vikramāditya Harṣa of Ujjain the king whose victory over the Śakas was commemorated by the commencement of the Śaka era in 78 A.D. (or was it the Saṁvat era of 57 B.C. ?). This Harṣa Vikramāditya is also stated to be the contemporary of Hiraṇya of Kashmir who died in 106 A.D."

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3. English translation by a Talukdar of Oudh, 1917.
4. P. 475, Wilson's English translation, 1840.
5. English translation by Stein, Vol. I, Book III.

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Chronological confusion is needlessly created by Stein by another footnote in connection with the verse 330 of chapter III of *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (p. 98) which refers to one Pratāpaśaila or Śilāditya as the son of Vikramāditya and the said Pratāpaśaila is identified therein with the Śilāditya mentioned by Huen Tsang and therefore the date of Vikramāditya mentioned in verse 125 is attempted to be refixed in the first half of the sixth century A.D. forgetting that like Vikramādityas, there were many Śilādityas in the annals of ancient India !

(2) Candra Gupta II Vikramāditya (Gupta dynasty 380-413 A.D.) was the son of Harasena or Samudra Gupta who was styled the "Napoleon of India". This Vikramāditya conquered Malwa, Gujarat and Kathiawad. Many scholars are inclined to regard Kālidāsa as the contemporary of this Vikramāditya. Later on we will deal with the pros and cons of this theory.

(3) Skanda Gupta also assumed the title of Vikramāditya. He defeated the Hūṇas who poured down the steppes of Central Asia. His reign and that of his predecessor, Candra Gupta II, is referred to as the "Golden Age of Indian History".

(4) Harṣa Vikramāditya of Ujjain who won the famous battle of Korur in 544 A.D. inflicting a severe defeat on the Mlecchas.

(5) Vikramāditya or Vikramāṅka, the hero of Bilhaṇa's historical poem bearing his name, came to the throne in 1076 A.D.

In the Chalukya dynasty, two Vikramādityas in the direct line of King Pulakeśin (611 A.D.) are mentioned in Bhandarkar's *Early History of the Deccan*, pp. 42-43 ; the last of the above Vikramādityas came to the throne in 680 A.D.

So also there must have been more than one Kālidāsa. The existence of two of them appears almost certain : (1) The Kālidāsa whom Prof. Wilson places in about the middle of the 2nd century B.C. (2) Another poet of the same name who must have lived in the 6th century A.D. and who is the reputed author of a treatise named

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Nānāśabdārtha-Yatna to which his friend Nicula composed a commentary named *Taralā*. He also may have been the author of *Nalodaya, Jyotirvidābharaṇa* and other works which are popularly but wrongly ascribed to the first-named poet.

Mātṛgupta who figures conspicuously in Vol. I, Book III, verses 125 to 330 of *Rājataraṅgiṇī* is considered by some as identical with Kālidāsa who was known by other names also, e.g. "Raghukara", "Megharudra", "Koṭijit" etc. *Rājataraṅgiṇī* takes note of the great Sanskrit poets well-known at the time according to their respective dates. In *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, Vol. I, Book IV, verse 144 Kalhaṇa mentions Bhavabhūti as patronized by Yaśovarman of Kanoj. It is significant that no mention is made of Kālidāsa in *Rājataraṅgiṇī* presumably because he has been given a place of honour therein as 'Mātṛgupta' in Vol. I, Book III, vv. 125-330. Mātṛgupta means "one under the special protection of the mother (Kālī)". The well-known traditionary legend that Kālidāsa was born a dunce and subsequently attained to his unrivalled poetical genius owing to the special favour of the Goddess 'Kālī' may be mentioned in this connection.

The Mandasor inscription in Malwa bearing Saṁvat 529 (473 A.D.) may be regarded as some reliable index to the date of Kālidāsa. A poet named Vatsabhaṭṭi is said to have imitated some verses of Kālidāsa. The sun temple where the inscription is found is said to have been built by Skanda Gupta. The idea expressed in one of these verses appears to be a crude reproduction of the first verse of *Uttara-Megha* comparing the cloud to the seven-storied palaces of Ujjain. On the authority of that inscription the latest date of our poet cannot be pushed further than the middle of the 5th century A.D. The means of communication and travel being very meagre in those days and the art of printing unknown, it must have taken a pretty long time for a poet to acquire the well-established reputation and wide popularity such as is evidenced from the said inscription.

It is considered that the literary style of Aśvaghoṣa who

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is assigned to the 1st century A.D., resembles that of Kālidāsa. It will be easily conceded that although the works of Aśvaghoṣa display an easy and elegant style, it clearly lacks the unique polish and finesse observable in Kālidāsa's writings and although in some places (as in *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarānanda*) marked similarities of phrase and fancy are found, it stands to reason that Aśvaghoṣa must have tried to emulate Kālidāsa who lived and wrote nearly a hundred and fifty years before him rather than to suppose that Kālidāsa was the imitator of Aśvaghoṣa.

Apart from the essential difference between the Gauḍī style and the Vaidarbhī style, the dictum used by Bhavabhūti does not much differ from that of Kālidāsa. It is therefore urged that Kālidāsa cannot be removed from Bhavabhūti by more than eight or nine centuries. The argument appears to be unsound as the literary style of Aśvaghoṣa is admitted to be similar to that of Kālidāsa although the former is assigned to the first century A.D. Similarly the diction of *Mṛcchakaṭika* is not far removed from that of our poet and Śūdraka, the author of that dramatic work, is placed by most scholars about 200 B.C. Śūdraka is even identified by some scholars with King Vikramāditya the patron of Kālidāsa.

Prof. Weber in his *History of Indian Literature* places Pāṇini in about the 3rd century B.C. and Dr. Bhandarkar places him about the beginning of the 7th century B.C.[6] Dr. Kane places him between 450 and 400 B.C. Kālidāsa generally follows the rules laid down by Pāṇini. It must not however be forgotten that a grammarian merely formulates, systematizes and records in a convenient form the grammatical conventions, rules and usages of a language as they actually prevail in his time. He does not invent such rules and conventions. Pāṇini's chief achievement is that he reduced the prevailing grammatical rules and conventions of the Sanskrit language to a precise, convenient and almost algebraic form and invested them with stability and

6. Bhandarkar's *Early History of the Deccan*, p. 8.

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permanence. It would be a grave mistake to think that the Sanskrit language suddenly became revolutionized and modernized owing to Pāṇini's efforts, although for reasons stated above they are doubtless of an epoch-making character. The date of Pāṇini even if correctly ascertained cannot therefore be of much help in solving the difficult question of Kālidāsa's date.

Some stray expressions appearing in Kālidāsian literature have been construed, with some show of reason, to indicate that the poet belonged to the literary circle patronized by a great king named Vikramāditya. The name given to one of his dramatic compositions, viz. *Vikramorvaśīya*, although the story relates to the well-known love episode of Purūravas and Urvaśī, expressions like अनुत्सेकः खलु विक्रमालङ्कारः and विक्रममहिम्ना वर्धते भवान् are significant in this respect. But the main question however as to which Vikramāditya is meant in these references is still left in doubt.

It appears to us that much the safest way to try and arrive at some fairly reliable conclusion as regards Kālidāsa's time is to avail ourselves of the internal evidence so far as it is available from the poet's writings. Such evidence though scanty is a surer guide in this respect. We note down a few points which strike us as very significant.

(1) The absence of any reference to Saptapadī, in the marriage ritual described by Kālidāsa in Canto VII of *Kumārasambhava*, as well as in Canto VII of *Raghuvaṁśa*, we think, points to the great antiquity of the poet. According to M.M. Dr. P. V. Kane the *Gṛhyasūtras* of Āśvalāyana and others which lay down Saptapadī as an essential part of the marriage ritual range in date from 800 to 200 B.C. and must have become fairly popularized in about 200 B.C. Saptapadī is not only an essential part of the marriage ceremony but is also most likely to appeal to the aesthetic temperament of the poet. Complete omission therefore of this charming and eloquent rite in both the Mahākāvyas of Kālidāsa is a strong presumptive evidence that he lived about 200 B.C. or even somewhat earlier. The main idea of Saptapadī, how-

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ever, was not unknown at the time.[7]

It is evident therefore that the Saptapadī rite had not become crystallized and firmly fixed as an essential part of the marriage ceremony when *Raghuvaṁśa* and *Kumārasambhava* came to be written. If Kālidāsa is placed during the period of Gupta kings as Prof. Lassen and some other scholars have done, i.e. between 330 and 380 A.D., a reference to Saptapadī would have been inevitable in both of his Mahākāvyas.

(2) It appears that in Kālidāsa's time theft and similar minor offences were punishable with the death penalty.[8] Capital punishment for minor offences so far as we know was abolished in the reign of Candra Gupta II (Vikramāditya) in about 405 A.D.[9] and continued to be so at any rate during the entire Gupta period. The prevalence of capital punishment for theft at the time of Kālidāsa militates against the theory that he belonged to the Gupta period. So also the almost puritanic social atmosphere at the time of the Gupta kings described in the following words: "No one killed any living thing, drank wine, ate onions or garlic; there were no butchers' shops nor distillation of wine"[10] does not tally with the description of the times portrayed in the literary works of Kālidāsa. (Vide Act VI of *Śākuntala* re drinking habits and many other similar references in the poet's works.)

(3) Another reason why Kālidāsa should not be assigned to the fourth century A.D. is that his writings disclose a marked craze for the celebration of sacrifices (यज्ञ) as a means of temporal and spiritual salvation. *Raghuvaṁśa* is replete with references to

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7. *Kumārasambhava* V. 39 :
   यतः सतां सन्नतगात्रि संगतं मनीषिभिः साप्तपदीनमुच्यते ।
8. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 185 :
   प्रस्फुरतौ मम हस्तावस्य सुमनसः पिनद्धुम् ।
   Vikramorvaśīya Act V. 1.
9. *Early History of India* by V. A. Smith, 4th Edition, 1924, p. 314.
10. Ibid., p. 281.

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sacrificial activities of the kings of the Raghu race, right down to the time of Rāma. It is significant that after Rāma, there is hardly any reference to Aśvamedha or other sacrificial celebrations, although Kuśa and Atithi were powerful and prosperous kings. There is also a reference to Aśvamedha in *Mālavikāgnimitra* (Act V, p. 102). It is but natural that the powerful obsession for celebrating sacrifices should gradually cool down as the influence of *Brāhmaṇa* literature with its ritualistic cult lost its hold on the popular mind. It should be noted that during the highly prosperous period of the Gupta kings there were comparatively few sacrificial celebrations. In the reign of Samudra Gupta in about 350 A.D., an Aśvamedha sacrifice appears to have been celebrated.

Kālidāsa therefore belongs to a period when the teachings of the *Brāhmaṇas* had still a firm grip on the mind especially of the priestly and princely classes in about the beginning of the Christian era. Our poet must therefore be relegated to a period a few centuries prior to the beginning of the Gupta dynasty which brings him as near as possible to the time assigned to him by Wilson, Bühler and C. V. Vaidya i.e. between the first and the second century B.C.

(4) *Mālavikāgnimitra* is admittedly the first dramatic production of Kālidāsa—then perhaps an obscure and unknown person. The dramatic works of earlier and better known poets held the field. In order therefore to push himself forward into popular notice Kālidāsa may have resorted to the device of basing the plot of that play on persons and incidents drawn from the life of a prince of the then powerful Suṅga dynasty who may have lived and died only a few years before his time.

It may be regarded as an indiscretion and bad taste to portray in a dramatic piece royal personages who happened to be exactly contemporaneous with the author thereof and on the other hand the public may display only a lukewarm interest in persons removed from them by a very great lapse of time. The *dramatis personae* of

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Mālavikāgnimitra must have been therefore cleverly chosen to be persons of the then ruling family whose memory was very fresh with the living generation.

Agnimitra was the son of the famous Puṣpamitra who was a staunch Hindu and a deadly enemy of Buddhism. Agnimitra ruled over Malwa as the viceroy and representative of his father about 140 B.C. and the seat of his government was Vidiśā (the modern Bhilsā) where it appears the drama was first staged. Agnimitra, had he not been immortalized thus as the hero of one of his dramas by Kālidāsa, would have probably remained a comparatively obscure figure in Indian history. Some incidents of this dramatic piece such as the internecine feud between the Vidarbha princes, the invasion of Vidarbha by Agnimitra, the ultimate partition of that province between the warring princes, the strikingly realistic character portraiture of some of the *dramatis personae* bear the unmistakable stamp of such incidents and persons being within the easy memory of the times when the drama came to be written. The word picture of the junior queen Irāvatī is very graphic. She is described as being over-addicted to alcohol and was under the obsession that the inebriated condition of a woman enhances her natural charms. Under the influence of spirituous liquor, she is violent and abusive in her language. She is described as 'piṅgalākṣī' (a lady with grayish tawny eyes which are supposed to indicate as a rule a vindictive, selfish and mean disposition).[11] She is also described as of a darkish colour having been designedly compared by the King to a row of monsoon clouds.[12]

In Act V (p. 102) appears a clear reference to the strained relations between Agnimitra and his father. On the same page there is another reference to the warhorse led by Vasumitra having been attacked on the southern banks

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11. Act IV, p. 63.
12. Act III. 21 :
बाष्पासारा हेमकाञ्चीगुणेन श्रोणीबिम्बादप्युपेक्षाच्युतेन ।
चण्डी चण्डं हन्तुमभ्युद्यता मां विद्युद्दाम्ना मेघराजीव विन्ध्यम् ॥

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of the Sindhu river by Yavanas (Greeks). All these references and details can only be explained by placing Kālidāsa about 150 B.C. It is hardly conceivable that the poet came to know all these particulars five hundred years after their time and faithfully incorporated them in his work.

(5) The use of the word "Caitya" in verse 23 of *Pūrva-Megha* appears significant and perhaps full of hidden meaning. The word "Caitya" has two meanings : (1) a Buddhistic vihāra or monastery ; (2) a big leafy tree such as the 'Pippala' or the Banyan ('Vaṭa'). The poet could have used a simpler expression such as ग्रामवृक्षा: with equal appropriateness because birds build their nests in all sorts of large leafy trees. The poet very probably tried to convey that, at this time, in or about the province of Malwa (Chhatisgad) the Buddha Vihāras were in a totally ruined and deserted condition so much so that they were the convenient haunts of birds to build their nests. Malwa at that time was a part of the domains of Puṣpamitra who, being a formidable enemy of Buddhism, mercilessly put to death the adherents of that religion and destroyed their monasteries. Kālidāsa was of a humane and kindly nature and far from being a religious fanatic and therefore may have strongly disliked the bitter and cruel crusade of Puṣpamitra against an inoffensive religious sect. As it was hardly possible to openly rebuke a powerful and vengeful ruling prince, he may have aimed a veiled dart against his intolerance and cruelty. This conjecture necessarily implies that he was a contemporary of Puṣpamitra and lived about the middle of the second century B.C.

Much appears to have been made of the last two lines of verse 14 of *Pūrva-Megha* and of the words "Nicula" and "Diṅnāga" appearing therein. Mallinātha's commentary on these words may perhaps have been based on some old tradition or was merely the result of the well-known ingenuity of professional commentators. Nicula is reputed to have written a commentary named *Taralā* on a treatise attributed to a Kālidāsa who lived about the end of the 6th century A.D. In an inscription dated 541 A.D. Diṅnāga,

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Vasubandhu and Asaṅga are mentioned as contemporaries of Kālidāsa. The plurality of persons of the same name referred to above, renders this kind of evidence untrustworthy in fixing the date of our poet.

Certain scholars are inclined to assign Kālidāsa to the middle period of the Gupta dynasty popularly known as "the golden era of Indian history". Prof. Lassen thinks that Kālidāsa flourished at the court of Samudra Gupta (330-380 A.D.). Prof. Upadhyaya (*India in Kālidāsa*) thinks that he was born during the reign of Samudra Gupta, lived during the entire reign of Candra Gupta II and died at an advanced age of 80 years in Kumāra Gupta's time. It is thought that *Kumārasambhava* was composed by the poet to ingratiate himself with Kumāra Gupta and the fact that the coins of the Imperial Guptas were impressed with the figure of Kārtikeya riding a peacock, and that the said imprint is accurately described by Kālidāsa in verse 4 of Canto VI of *Raghuvaṁśa,* are taken as a further evidence that Kālidāsa was a contemporary of Kumāra Gupta.

That the title of Vikramāditya was assumed by Candra Gupta II and others is a strong evidence that there must have been a great king before their time who first bore that name and made it famous in history and legend.

It must also be remembered that Kālidāsa was a staunch Śaivaite while the Gupta kings were inclined to Vaiṣṇavism. It is said that Candra Gupta II was a devoted Vaiṣṇavite.

Ujjain the favourite city of Kālidāsa was at no time the capital of the Gupta dynasty. The old and well-known city of Pāṭaliputra may preferably claim that honour. The city of Pāṭaliputra was the capital of the Gupta empire in the reign of Samudra Gupta and continued to be so almost until the end of that dynasty. (Vide in this context p. 170 of *Oxford History of India* by Vincent A. Smith, Third Edition, 1958.)

In v. 30 of *Pūrva-Megha* it is stated that the story of Udayana and his abduction of Vāsavadattā was on the lips of all old people of the Avanti province at the time of Kāli-

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dāsa. Both Udayana and Pradyota were contemporaries of Buddha. If Kālidāsa is taken to have lived in about the 4th century A.D., it is hardly possible that an incident about eight hundred years old could be quite fresh within the memory of the people of his time.

(6) In *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 219, the widow of a deceased person is not considered as heir to his estate, which must be the law prevailing only in the pre-Christ period.

(7) Shri C. V. Vaidya, who, when arguing in favour of the great antiquity of Kālidāsa, refers to Uragapur as the capital of the Pāṇḍya kings[13], supports the theory that the poet must be assigned to a period prior to the first century B.C. Uragapur ceased to be the capital of the Pāṇḍya kings after their defeat by Kārikala, the Chola king, in the 1st century B.C. and thereafter their capital was transferred first to Kāverīpaṭṭam and in the 3rd century A.D. to Madurā.

There is also a considerable cleavage of opinion regarding the birth-place of Kālidāsa.

The Bengalese claim him as having been born in Murshidabad and many legendary stories about the poet are current in that province. Reliance in support of this theory among other reasons is placed on his name 'Kālidāsa', 'Kālī' being the tutelary deity of Bengal.

Prof. Pandit Luxman Kalla has tried hard to prove that Kālidāsa was a Kashmiri Brahmin. He supports his theory by many ingenious though rather unconvincing arguments.

Some scholars think that Vidiśā (Bhilsā) must have been his birth-place.

The internal evidence furnished by his writings, though meagre, may well warrant the inference that his birth-place was Malwa—very probably Ujjain, and that he may have extensively travelled over the greater part of the Indian continent and also spent some time in the enchanting regions in the very heart of the Himalayas such as the famous Kashmir valley. He also must have lived in high society,

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13. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 59.

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rubbing shoulders with princes and magnates and well accustomed to the ways and refinements of aristocratic life. The torrid and devastating heat of summer so vividly described by him in Canto I of *Ṛtusaṁhāra* testifies to his intimate acquaintance with the arid and fearfully sultry plains of Northern India. His glowing descriptions of the divine majesty and grandeur of the Himalayan scenery characterized by remarkable vividness of detail and loving regard bespeaks of his familiarity with those enchanting haunts of scenic magnificence.[14] His great veneration and love for the city of Ujjain, of the temple of Mahākāla, of the Siprā river, is very significant in this respect. He appears to have fairly good knowledge of the general topography of India which he displays with good effect in Cantos IV and XIII of *Raghuvaṁśa* and in the first part of *Meghadūta*. The question of the domicile of Kālidāsa like his date must remain unsolved until some submerged evidence of a more conclusive and convincing nature is brought to the surface in course of time either by accident or through the labours of some fortunate research scholar. Until then for all practical purposes the date of Kālidāsa may be accepted as round about the first century B.C. and his birth-place the City of Ujjain (Avanti).

14. *Kumārasambhava* I. 1–16.

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Chapter II

"ŚĀKUNTALA" OR "THE LOST RING"

Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms
and the fruits of its decline
And all by which the soul is charmed
enraptured, feasted and fed,
Wouldst thou the Earth and Heaven
itself in one sole name combine,
I name thee, Oh Śakuntalā,
and all at once is said.

—Goethe

The plot of *Śākuntala* is drawn from *Mahābhārata.*[1]

THE PLOT OF THE PLAY

ACT I: The first Act of the play opens out with the scene of the royal hunt. Duṣyanta the hero makes his introductory appearance before the audience in the pursuit of a deer flying at a great speed to escape imminent death at his well-aimed arrow. The royalty at the time was known to indulge in four diversions, viz. hunting, wine, women and gambling.[2] In due moderation, indulgence in these diversions was allowed to the Kṣatriyas to beguile the tedium of and as a relief from the worries of governance and to compensate them for the ever present risk of warfare. Mṛgayā (hunting) is extolled in Act II. 5 of *Śākuntala*

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1. Ādiparva, ch. 65–69.
2. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 7 :
   न मृगयाभिरतिर्न दुरोदरं न च शशिप्रतिमाभरणं मधु ।
   तमुदयाय न वा नवयौवना प्रियतमा यतमानमपाहरत् ॥
   Śākuntala II. 5.
   Raghuvaṁśa IX. 49.

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as well as IX. 49 of *Raghuvaṁśa*. Excessive addiction[3] to these, however, took the form of vice with highly deleterious results. Daśaratha would not have been guilty of killing an ascetic (Śrāvaṇa) had he not been carried away by his inordinate love for hunting. Gambling indulged in excess cost Nala his kingdom and Dharma succumbing to the wiles and importunities of the crafty Śakuni not only lost his empire but ultimately brought about the destruction of the Kṣatriya race in the Mahābhārata war. The evil effects of excessive attachment to wine and women are illustrated by the poet in Canto XIX of *Raghuvaṁśa*.

The hero of *Śākuntala* being however portrayed as a धीरोदात्त नायक (a noble and virtuous man) and an ideal king, although fond of hunting and susceptible to female charms, is necessarily a sober, moderate and disciplined person and does not give free rein to his whims and desires. Immediately he is made aware by a hermit that he was trespassing on the holy precincts of a hermitage and pursuing a deer affiliated to it, he promptly stops his hunting activities and orders his army to refrain from molesting the denizens of the hermitage.

He would have immediately returned to his capital but thinks it his duty to visit the Āśrama of the great sage Kaṇva who was away on a sacred religious mission. On entering the hermitage he was courteously received by Śakuntalā and her two friends Anasūyā and Priyaṁvadā. On the eve of his entering the hermitage he was not a little intrigued and surprised by the throbbing of his right arm as, he thought, no auspicious event of any importance was likely to happen in such a wild and out-of-the-way place. Fate, however, was working in its own mysterious and inscrutable way ; and the king was about to meet his favourite queen and the mother of his all-conquering and illustrious son. The king had discarded his costly robes and ornaments—the insignia of his royalty—

3. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 69 :
परिवृढ्रागमनुबन्धसेवया मृगया जहार चतुरेव कामिनी ।

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as it was customary to visit a holy Āśrama in a modest and unostentatious dress ; and he was therefore taken to be an ordinary gentleman of good position and family by the hermit girls. It will be noted that Śakuntalā and her friends hold converse with him without the least restraint or embarrassment. Between the king and Śakuntalā, however, it was almost a case of love at first sight. The king thinking that she was a Brahmin girl and therefore out of his reach put a strong curb on his feelings. In the course of the conversation which ensued Śakuntalā's parentage was disclosed as also the king's real identity. After the exchange of some loving glances and signs between the love-stricken couple the king had to leave the Āśrama hurriedly to prevent his army which was encamped nearby from causing panic and confusion among the inhabitants of the hermitage.

ACT II : The second Act begins with a very vivid and realistic description of the king's hunting expedition by his Brahmin friend Vidūṣaka. The hunting however was suddenly brought to an end by the love-lorn condition of the king which disinclined him for the arduous life of a huntsman. The king therefore orders his general to stop all hunting activities and prevent the army from causing trouble to the ascetics. Thereafter while the king was engaged in a confidential talk with Vidūṣaka regarding the growing attachment between himself and Śakuntalā, some inmates of Kaṇvāśrama arrive on the scene and request him to reside in the hermitage itself in the absence of Maharśi Kaṇva to protect the sacrificial performances from the ravages of the Rākṣasas—a request which is too readily granted by the king as it afforded him an opportunity to be near his beloved Śakuntalā. He sends Vidūṣaka—his talkative and slow-witted friend—to the capital, on some convenient pretext, after informing him (Vidūṣaka) that his talk about the hermit girl Śakuntalā was nothing but a mere passing joke and as such it should not be taken seriously. The king was afraid that Vidūṣaka's presence in the hermitage was likely to be a serious impediment to

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his courtship of Śakuntalā. He also thought that the loose-tongued fool would spread the report of his entanglement with a forest girl among the inmates of the harem which was to be prevented at all cost.

ACT III: As the king was now residing in the very heart of the hermitage unencumbered by the presence of Vidūṣaka his love affair makes rapid headway under favourable environments and the smooth-sailing courtship culminates in the consummation of a happy union which is described by the poet with a commendable delicacy and restraint.

ACT IV: Act IV is the apex and the very cream of this unique literacy piece. As a master artist, by a few rapid strokes of his inspired brush, gives beauty, life and finish to a picture, Kālidāsa in this Act with his mature craftsmanship creates his never-to-be-forgotten delineation of Śakuntalā's fascinating character. The revered old sage Kaṇva, the guileless and deep-seated affection between Śakuntalā and her two friends, the touching solicitude of the heroine for the orphan young deer and her favourite creeper Vanajyotsnā, her anxiety for her old ascetic foster father who was wearing himself out by his austere penance and the acute pang she was experiencing at the imminent prospect of her separation from him, her eager inquiry as to when she would again see the hermitage—the home of her happy childhood and adolescence, Kaṇva's parting advice to the newly married girl on the eve of her departure to her husband's family as well as his highly dignified and restrained message to her husband, the loving benediction of the sylvan deities to the departing Śakuntalā, the deep pathos and skilful manifestation of the noblest passions and sentiments of the human heart expressed in phrase and rhythm of unequalled beauty which permeate the whole scene—makes this portion of the drama an immortal and a matchless specimen of the world's noblest literature.

ACT V: This Act opens with the introduction of the king suffering from a mysterious and nameless longing. Queen Haṁsapadikā taunts him with being कमलवसतिमात्रनिर्वृतः

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(satisfied with chewing the cud of past indistinct memories regardless of the sweet pleasures with which he is surrounded). He is cogitating in his heart on what he considers भावस्थिराणि जननान्तरसौहृदानि (the deep and abiding affections of the previous births firmly imbedded in his subconscious mind) suddenly brought to the surface by the sweet melodies of Haṁsapadikā's pathetic ditty. As a matter of fact what is upsurging in his mind are not the memories of his past lives but those of Śakuntalā's sweet and abiding love temporarily submerged and obscured by the curse of Durvāsas. It is the deep remorse and agonizing wail of his subconscious mind. At the end of the fifth Act, even immediately after his repudiation of Śakuntalā, his persistent and poignant mental depression, as it were, was forcing on him the conviction that after all Śakuntalā must have been in the right and that his treatment of her was unjust and undeserved. Śārṅgarava duly delivers his message and presents Śakuntalā to the king as his lawful wife. The curse of Durvāsas however fully plays its part and neither the strong remonstrance of Śārṅgarava or Śakuntalā's narration of the fond reminiscences of their recent fervid love, can shake the king out of his obstinate refusal to recognize her as his lawful wife. It must be stated here, that the curse of Durvāsas, along with the incident of the lost ring, are pure inventions on the part of Kālidāsa, and form the very core of the plot of the play. Owing, however, to the extreme irascibility and eccentricity of the sage, his curse has all the appearance of reality and does not in the least derogate from the excellence of the dramatic work. The ascetics depart in discomfiture and anger and the helpless Śakuntalā bemoaning her pitiable lot is suddenly carried away by her mother to the abode of the Gods to await a favourable turn of fate.

ACT VI: The sixth Act at its commencement presents the police officers of the king who had taken in custody a poor fisherman on suspicion of having stolen the royal ring. So true to life is this picture of police psychology that it may be safely said that the lapse of nearly two thousand years

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has done nothing to change or improve the police mentality to any material extent. The same arrogance, and scant regard for justice and fair play, the same eagerness to convict an accused by means fair or foul, the same tendency to tyrannize over the helpless and fawn upon the prosperous and the successful, the same unscrupulousness and hauteur which marks out the police force as a distinct caste even in our time, appear to have been the distinguishing characteristics of this realistic and skilful portraiture of these guardians of public peace and good order even in very ancient India.

The recovery of the king from his lapse of memory introduces a chapter of विप्रलम्भशृङ्गार (love in separation) so dear to the heart of our poet.

From his mournful musings, moanings and remorseful torpor the king is aroused by Mātali, Indra's charioteer, by the somewhat drastic device of roughly manhandling his friend Vidūṣaka with a view to stir up his dormant valour and thereafter he (Mātali) invited him to assist Indra in waging war against his formidable opponent Kālanemi.

ACT VII: The seventh Act finds the king returning to earth after his victorious campaign against Indra's enemies and relates the unique honour and recognition he has received from the grateful Indra. According to Indra's plan and his specific directions, Mātali on the way makes a halt at the Hemakūṭa mountain, the residence of the venerable Mārica (the father of the gods as well as of the titans) where Śakuntalā was passing her days in practising penance. The king finds Hemakūṭa a pleasanter place than Svarga itself, and Mātali leaves him for a while with a view to acquaint the great sage of the king's arrival and solicit an interview with him. In the meanwhile the king falls in with the child prodigy Sarvadamana and is instinctively drawn to him. The incident of the charmed bracelet accidentally slipping to the ground from the child's wrist reveals to the delighted king his relationship to the wonder child and soon after he meets the emaciated and forlorn Śakuntalā in the typical vestments of a प्रोषितभर्तृका. The re-

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united happy couple pay their respect to the hoary sage Mārica who informs the king about the curse of Durvāsas, thus relieving him of the great remorse and feeling of guilt at his past harsh treatment of his virtuous wife. The drama ends in joy and happiness for everybody concerned.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

ŚAKUNTALĀ

The principal figure of this play is the heroine Śakuntalā. The daughter of a celestial courtesan by a well-known monarch who had taken to penance and asceticism, brought up from her very birth in the spiritual and holy environment of a hermitage, cherished by the sage Kaṇva with deep parental affection, endowed with superhuman beauty and grace of form and blessed with upsurging and blossoming youth,[4] the heroine illumines and glorifies every page of this unique and immortal literary production. In the first and the second Acts she is presented to the reader as an affectionate, guileless and susceptible girl brimming over with the mere joy of living. Anasūya and Priyaṁvadā are fitting friends and companions for this fascinating beauty and set off her portraiture at every stage.[5] Priyaṁvadā is of a spritely, sportive and jocular disposition while Anasūyā, perhaps slightly senior in age, is comparatively of a sober and somewhat serious temperament.

Śakuntalā is unpleasantly surprised when she feels the first shock of the amorous passion at the sight of the handsome king.[6] Being artless and simple-minded she could

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4. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 28 :
   अत्र पयोधरविस्तारयितृ आत्मनो यौवनमुपालभस्व।
   Śākuntala Act I, p. 30 :
   कुसुममिव लोभनीयं यौवनमङ्गेषु संनद्धम्।
5. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 38 :
   अहो समवयोरूपरमणीयं भवतीनां सौहार्दम्।
6. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 38 :
   किं नु खल्विमं प्रेक्ष्य तपोवनविरोधिनो विकारस्य गमनीयास्मि संवृत्ता।

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not altogther conceal[7] this too sudden impact of passion which had overtaken her unawares. Her charming ruse and pretence that her foot is pricked by a thorn, to enable her to halt for a moment and snatch a hurried though loving and lingering glance at her newly found love, speaks volumes of her shyness and maiden modesty.[8] This stunt is repeated by the poet in the third Act of Vikramorvaśīya. Her taking courage in both hands to write a love billet to the king, her trepidation when her friends leave her alone with him, her refusal to be served by him as being unwomanly and impolite,[9] her earnest request to him to respect her virgin purity and to allow her to consult her friends once again[10] before taking a decisive step towards the consummation of her great love,[11] her hastily turning her face to prevent her lover from imprinting on her virgin lips the first impassioned kiss of ardent love—these are supreme artistic touches which make the personality of Śakuntalā a matchless and ever-living wonder.

Śakuntalā's departure from the happy home of her childhood and youth and the loving shelter of her adoptive father has naturally an intense appeal to all parents whose beloved daughters have at some time to leave the parental protection in order to fulfill their destiny in strange and unfamiliar surroundings. The fourth Act which is the apex of the poet's genius refers to an incident which is bound to occur in almost every family and skilfully presents the inter-play and reactions of the most delicate human affections and feelings. The hearts of her dear friends are the

7. *Śākuntala* Act II. 74 :
विनयवारितवृत्तिरतस्तया न विवृतो मदनो न च संवृतः ॥
8. *Śākuntala* Act II. 12.
9. *Śākuntala* Act III, p. 107 :
न माननीयेष्वात्मानमपराधयिष्ये ।
10. *Śākuntala* Act III, p. 108 :
पौरव, रक्षाविनयम्। मदनसंतप्तापि न खल्वात्मनः प्रभवामि ।
Śākuntala Act III, p. 109 :
मुञ्च तावन्माम्। भूयोऽपि सखीजनमनुमानयिष्ये ।
11. *Śākuntala* Act III. 21.

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warring ground between the satisfaction and joy they feel at Śakuntalā's approaching union with her husband and her elevation to great position and wealth and the excruciating agony at her imminent and almost permanent separation from them. They were thinking of sending the token ring to the king with some ascetic to remind him of his obligations and promises to his wife when the incorporeal voice came to the rescue and revealed Śakuntalā's marriage and pregnancy to Kaṇva. What parting present can the poor hermit girls make to the beloved companion of their childhood and youth ? They had with a view to this very happy event preserved a Bakula garland in a cocoanut vessel.[12] Although this poor present was meant for the would-be empress of India, in view of the great and disinterested affection which had prompted it, its worth was far greater than all the jewels in her imperial treasury. The great regret of her friends to adorn her matchless beauty with only floral embellishments and their sincere joy at the appropriate ornaments and vestments opportunely presented by the sylvan deities for the great occasion bespeaks of hearts overflowing with immeasurable love.

The revered and aged personality of the great sage Kaṇva who, although by his great spiritual eminence he has risen above the petty attachments of family life, yet feels bewildered and grief-stricken at the near prospect of separation from his dear adopted child, is at once striking and appealing. He exclaims in his great grief : "Oh ! if this is the helpless condition of a forester without any family ties what may be the mental anguish of parents faced with imminent separation from the child of their own flesh and blood !"[13] His fervent appeal to the trees and plants of the

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12. *Śākuntala* Act IV, p. 127 :
तेन ह्येतस्मिंश्चूतशाखावलम्बिते नालिकेरसमुद्गक एतन्निमित्तमेव कालान्तरक्षमा निक्षिप्ता मया केसरमालिका । तदिमां हस्तसंनिहितां कुरु ।

13. *Śākuntala* Act IV. 5 :
वैक्लव्यं मम तावदीदृशमिदं स्नेहादरण्यौकसः
पीड्यन्ते गृहिणः कथं न तनयाविश्लेषदुःखैर्नवैः ।

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hermitage to give their blessings, on the eve of her departure, to his dear girl who always felt overjoyed at the advent of their flowering season and yet was reluctant to pluck a leaf or a flower from them for fear of doing them harm and who refrained from drinking water herself before their wants were fully satisfied and his dignified message to his royal son-in-law, are in harmony with his grand character.

On the eve of her departure from the holy Āśrama which long associations have endeared to her, bewildering grief at the separation from her father and her dear friends, from the fondly cherished animals of the hermitage and even the plants and trees whom she loves as her near relations invests this Act with a deep pathos and moves the hearts of the readers almost to the verge of tears.

In Act V Śakuntalā's naïveté, modesty and admirable patience in the face of mortal disappointment and grave affront inflicted by her husband shows that she is faithful to the parting advice of her beloved father—"Do not hit back through anger although affronted by your husband".[14] Womanlike, however, she flares up at the offensive taunt[15] of Duṣyanta with reference to the character of her mother and the incident of her birth and desertion and all the pent up ire at her grievous wrong finds vent in a cutting and well-deserved retort to the king. Even a long-suffering woman will turn at bay when touched to the quick.

In Act VI Śakuntalā does not appear at all, although she is the central figure round which the entire act is made to revolve.

In Act VII she is changed beyond recognition, wearing old and discoloured garments, worn out by the continuous observance of arduous, religious inhibitions, her tresses in

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14. *Śākuntala* Act IV. 17 :
भर्तुर्विप्रकृतापि रोषणतया मा स्म प्रतीपं गमः।

15. *Śākuntala* Act V, p. 175 :
अनार्य, आत्मनो हृदयानुमानेन पश्यसि। क इदानीमन्यो धर्मकञ्चुकप्रवेशिन स्तृणच्छन्नकूपोपमस्य तवानुकृतिं प्रतिपत्स्यते।

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complete disorder, yet faithful to the deep and abiding love to her husband, purged and purified by long suffering—she presents a picture altogether different to that which beautifies the pages of the first three Acts of the play. "The young year's blossoms" are gone but there is a rich harvest of "the fruits of its decline"!

The sublimation and spiritualizing of the mere sex passion and lust of the flesh, appears to be the culminating point and ideal of the play deliberately designed by the poet. Śakuntalā readily forgives her apparently perfidious husband, remarking in the spirit of the long-suffering and patient Hindu wife: "Really in those days, some evil act on my part previously committed, must have been bearing its evil fruit, otherwise my kind-hearted Lord would never have been harsh and irresponsive towards me."[16] Notwithstanding all that she has passed through, she is still the same modest bashful maid as of old.[17]

DUṢYANTA

Kālidāsa has portrayed the king as a brave and noble hero (धीरोदात्त नायक). Although a very powerul potentate he promptly obeys a Brahmin ascetic and withdraws his arrow aimed at a deer of the hermitage, whose holy precincts he shortly enters after putting aside his royal robes and jewels,[18] as ostentation and grandeur was out of tune with its peaceful and spiritual atmosphere. He is humane and kindhearted and orders his charioteer to revive and freshen up by a wash and rubbing the horses of his chariot which were spent up after a long run.[19] Being

16. *Śākuntala* Act VII p. 253 :
नूनं मे सुचरितप्रतिबन्धकं पुराकृतं तेषु दिवसेषु परिणाममासीद्येन सानुक्रोशोऽप्यार्यपुत्रो मयि विरसः संवृत्तः ।

17. *Śākuntala* Act VII, p. 255 :
जिह्रेम्यार्यपुत्रेण सह गुरुसमीपे गन्तुम् ।

18. *Śākuntala*, p. 24 :
विनीतवेषेण प्रवेष्टव्यानि तपोवनानि नाम ।

19. *Śākuntala*, p. 24 :
यावदाश्रमवासिनः प्रत्यवेक्ष्याहमुपावर्ते तावदार्द्रपृष्ठाः क्रियन्तां वाजिनः ।

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conscious of his innate piety and goodness he has great confidence in his unerring good instinct or inner voice[20] which he feels sure will not lead him astray to covet what is forbidden by the Śāstras. When he discovers that Śakuntalā is a Kṣatriyakanyā he feels relieved and happy.[21] Immediately he finds that his army is causing disturbance and panic among the denizens of the hermitage, he takes prompt steps to prevent its recurrence. He was fully aware that in the mild and peace-loving ascetics there exists a hidden destroying fire and therefore utmost care must be taken not to molest them beyond endurance.[22] He is a shrewd observer of human nature and has a philosophic bent of mind. Some of his casual observations would do credit to a highly cultured and contemplative mind.[23] The apprehensions aroused in him due to the sudden arrival of the disciples of Kaṇva marks him out as a highly conscientious monarch inspired by a great solicitude for the welfare of his subjects.[24] His forcibly turning away his gaze from the arresting beauty of Śakuntalā, whom he then considered another man's wife, his great patience and forbearance at the harsh taunts and affronts of the incensed Śārṅgarava who does not hesitate to call him ऐश्वयमत्त (inebriated with wealth and power), the painful vacilla-

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20. *Śākuntala* Act I. 19 :
सतां हि संदेहपदेषु वस्तुषु प्रमाणमन्तःकरणप्रवृत्तयः ।
21. *Śākuntala* Act I. 24 :
भव हृदय साभिलाषं संप्रति संदेहनिर्णयो जातः ।
22. *Śākuntala* Act II, p. 67 :
शमप्रधानेषु तपोधनेषु गूढं हि दाहात्मकमस्ति तेजः ।
23. *Śākuntala* Act II, p. 59 :
कामी स्वतां पश्यति ।
Śākuntala Act II, p. 70 :
सर्वः खलु कान्तमात्मीयं पश्यति ।
Śākuntala Act V, p. 152 :
रम्याणि वीक्ष्य मधुरांश्च निशम्य शब्दान्पर्युत्सुकीभवति यत्सुखितोऽपि जन्तुः ।
Śākuntala Act V, p. 157 :
औत्सुक्यमात्रमवसाययति प्रतिष्ठा ।
24. *Śākuntala* Act V. 9.

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tion of his mind between the natural desire not to cast off the heavenly beauty which good fortune had thrown in his way and the reluctance of a virtuous man to contact a strange woman[25] are some of the recognized characteristics of a धीरोदात्त नायक.

He is reduced to a pitiable condition of deep remorse and inconsolable grief when full recollection of Śakuntalā surges back to his mind and the whole of the sixth Act is taken up in cogitating upon the sweet and bitter reminiscences of his past association with his deeply-wronged wife who had completely disappeared beyond his ken.

His generosity and freedom from greed are exemplified in dealings with the estate and effects left behind by one Dhanamitra, a rich merchant, who was drowned in a shipwreck.

He was a brave general and a great warrior who defeats a horde of formidable demons invincible even to Indra. His great valour is duly set off by his equally great modesty. His generosity gives the credit of his glorious success to Indra's greatness.[26] He humbly asks the forgiveness of his aggrieved wife and promises to fully atone for his harshness and injustice to her. The portraiture of the hero of the play however is more or less of a conventional nature and does not appeal to the reader as that of the immeasurably lovable Śakuntalā.

KAṆVA

He was a great sage of the Kāṣyapa clan. His hermitage was on the bank of the river Mālinī some distance from Hastināpura. He is the foster father of the heroine whom

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25. *Śākuntala* Act V, p. 164 :
अनिर्वर्णनीयं परकलत्रम् ।
Śākuntala Act V. 19 :
भ्रमर इव विभाते कुन्दमन्तस्तुषारं
न च खलु परिभोक्तुं नैव शक्नोमि हातुम् ।

26. *Śākuntala* Act VII. 4 :
सिध्यन्ति कर्मसु महत्स्वपि यन्नियोज्याः संभावनागुणमवेहि तमीश्वराणाम् ।

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he found abandoned in the forest immediately after her birth, kept alive with honey fed by the kind Śakunta birds. His portraiture is majestic and reverence-inspiring. He is far from being a वेदाभ्यासजड person (impervious to human sentiments and feelings owing to the long and deep study of the Vedas) but dearly loves the foundling Śakuntalā as if she were his own flesh and blood. He is not only learned but versatile and well informed in worldly affairs and conventions.[27] He is like the lofty Himālayas whose flanks weather storms and squalls, but whose sublime heights are ever calm and peaceful. On being informed by the incorporeal voice about Śakuntalā's marriage and pregnancy, he is not a bit ruffled or displeased, but congratulates and blesses her with his usual unfailing affection. Although an anchorite and divorced from all worldly relationship, he is deeply and genuinely affected at his parting from his dear child. His advice to her as the newly wedded wife of a great king is such as every girl in any condition of life should carefully lay to heart with modifications appropriate to her peculiar conditions and environments. His message to the king is terse and dignified. Verse 16 in Act IV expresses sentiments testifying to his intimate acquaintance with the then social conditions and its last line almost appears to foreshadow what presently lay in store for Śakuntalā at the court of Duṣyanta.[28] When Aditi suggests to Mārica that the good news of Śakuntalā's re-union with her husband should be conveyed to Kaṇva, Mārica promptly remarks तपःप्रभावात्प्रत्यक्षं सर्वमेव तत्रभवतः (His reverence knows everything due to his spiritual greatness). He would never have forgiven Duṣyanta for the grievous affront dealt out by him to Śakuntalā had he not been aware of the curse of Durvāsas. The description of his तपोवन, though brief, leaves an indelible impression of its peaceful and blissful atmosphere where the first four Acts

27. *Śākuntala* Act IV, p. 143 :
न खलु धीमतां कश्चिदविषयो नाम ।

28. *Śākuntala* Act IV. 16 :
भाग्यायत्तमतःपरं न खलु तद्वाच्यं वधूबन्धुभिः ।

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of the play are staged. The seventh Act is laid in Māricāśrama, a place equally holy, elevating and purifying.

Although therefore the plot deals with human affairs like love and marriage, it throughout breathes a superhuman and heavenly atmosphere and Goethe therefore rightly refers to the drama as a combination of *earth* and *heaven*.

The other characters of the play are, Vidūṣaka whom the king rightly calls मृत्पिण्डबुद्धि (a blockhead), the two friends and companions of the heroine who serve to set off her glorious personality, Kañcukin the old, honoured servant of the royal household and philosopher, Sānumatī, the celestial nymph, Mātali, Indra's charioteer—these are minor characters and do not need a special notice.

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Chapter III

VIKRAMORVAŚĪYA

The plot of this drama is based on a very old mythological incident. The first reference to it occurs in the *Ṛgveda* (X. 95)—न वै स्त्रैणानि सख्यानि सन्ति सालावृकाणां (or शाला वृकाणां) हृदयान्येता। (With women there can be no lasting friendship; the hearts of hyenas are the hearts of women.) This is the moral the old poets had deduced from the story of Urvaśī!

The story is repeated with varied versions in *Bṛhaddevatā* (VII. 140-147) and in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (V. 1-2) where it is stated that Urvaśī consented to live with Purūravas on condition that the latter may not be seen by her in a naked state. The Gandharvas, jealous that she was living with a mortal, created lightning and showed to Urvaśī the king clothed in Nature's garb. Urvaśī therefore left him.

Viṣṇu-Purāṇa (IV. 6) introduces two rams who are Urvaśī's pets; while the king and Urvaśī were together the Gandharvas carried away the rams and when the naked king flew to their rescue, showed him in that state to Urvaśī by means of sudden lightning.

Kathāsaritsāgara (III. 4-30), *Harivaṁśa* and *Vedārthadīpikā* also refer to the story.

The plot of *Vikramorvaśīya*, however, closely follows the version of *Matsya-Purāṇa* and appears to be very poor and inartistic. Max Müller opines that the story of Urvaśī and Purūravas is an allegory. Urvaśī (ऊरू + अस् or वस्) means vast or pervading and is the Dawn. Purūravas means endowed with light (रव = colour) and is the Sun-God.[1]

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1. S. P. Pandit's notes on *Vikramorvaśīya*.

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THE PLOT OF THE PLAY

ACT I: Urvaśī, Citralekhā, Sahajanyā, Menakā and other celestial damsels were returning from Kubera's palace when Urvaśī and Citralekhā were forcibly abducted by a powerful demon named Keśin. The celestial courtesans call out for help and Purūravas, who was within hearing, rescues Urvaśī from the clutches of the demon but himself falls in love with her at first sight which sentiment is returned by Urvaśī with equal intensity. The celestial courtesans soon after proceed to heaven.

ACT II: Citralekhā and Urvaśī visit the palace of the lovelorn king. There Urvaśī who was invisible overhears the confidential talk of the king with Vidūṣaka and comes to know that he (the king) is also deeply in love with herself. In return she reveals her ardent passion towards him by means of a fitting love ditty inscribed on a Bhūrjapatra (the leaf or rather the bark of the Bhūrja tree) and soon after appears in person before him. Immediately, however, a messenger from Indra's palace comes to summon Urvaśī to take part in a drama named Laxmīsvayaṁvara composed by the sage Bharata himself and she has to leave the king's presence. The Bhūrjapatra which is entrusted for custody to Vidūṣaka slips out of his hand and is carried away by the breeze. In the meanwhile the queen comes on a visit to the king, her object being to ascertain, if possible, the truth of the scandal about the king's attachment to a celestial damsel. As fate would have it, the Bhūrjapatra (love-billet) as it is being blown away by the wind is caught by the anklets of the queen who on reading its contents is confirmed in her worst suspicions about the king's waywardness. She taxes her husband with his infidelity and leaves him in anger regardless of his attempt to propitiate her.

ACT III: In acting her part of Lakṣmī in the drama Lakṣmīsvayaṁvara, Urvaśī commits sad mistakes and instead of Puruṣottama, utters the name of Purūravas more than once. Bharata is thereby highly displeased and curses her that she will lose her place in heaven. Indra, however,

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who is a friend of Purūravas, changes the curse into a blessing by ordering Urvaśī to go to the earth and reside with her lover until such time as she begets a son by him. Urvaśī is therefore free to consort with the king. Another obstacle in the way of the loving couple is removed when the queen under the pretext of observing a vow (व्रत) named Priyaprasādana (propitiation of the husband), allows the king to have free and unrestrained intercourse with his new mistress. The queen is merely making a virtue of necessity and her conduct is aptly described by Vidūṣaka as follows :[2] "When the fish bites his hand and escapes, the disgruntled fisherman consoles himself by saying, 'Let it go, by all means, I will thereby get religious merit'." The queen knows that the king would ultimately have his own way in spite of her opposition ; in that case why should not she allow him to do as he pleases with good grace ? Urvaśī therefore who is hidden by तिरस्करिणी (the power to move about invisible) meets the king with an easy conscience and remains with him as his mistress.

ACT IV : The fourth Act begins with a Viṣkambhaka or interlude where by means of a short conversation between two celestial courtesans the audience is informed that Urvaśī incensed at the king's loving glances at a Vidyādhara girl thoughtlessly entered the forbidden precincts of the Kumāravana (the forest inhabited by Kumāra) and by virtue of the ordinance of the celibate Kumāra is immediately converted into a creeper. This Act may well be compared to Act IX of *Mālatīmādhava* where the poet desirous of creating a fitting occasion for displaying his skill in portraying Vipralambhaśṛṅgāra (the pathos of the love sentiment in separation) deliberately deviates into a situation which strikes one as a clumsy appendage to the plot. The whole of this Act is replete with the favourite fancies and stunts familiar to Sanskrit poets which in some form or other are often repeated elsewhere. At last with

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2. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act III, p. 77 :
छिन्नहस्ते मत्स्ये पलायिते धीवरो भणति—'गच्छ, धर्मो मे भविष्यति' इति।

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the aid of the सङ्गमनीय मणि (the jewel which causes union of separated lovers) fashioned out of the lustre of the divine Gaurī's feet, Urvaśī is reconverted into her original self and the king returns with her to his capital.

ACT V: The beginning of this Act finds the king performing some religious ceremonies at the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā in company of the queen. Urvaśī is not with him as she is not his legally married wife. The सङ्गमनीय मणि which is kept outside the tent covered by a तालपत्र is whisked away by a vulture under the mistaken belief that it was a piece of flesh, owing to its glowing red colour. On hearing this the king rushes out with his bow and arrow to find that the bird has flown out of his reach. Some time after, however, the bird is brought to the king pierced by an arrow whereon the name of Āyu the son of Aila (Purūravas) was inscribed. While the king is wondering at this incident, in comes a तापसी (the inmate of an Āśrama) escorting a young boy whom she introduces to the king as the son of Urvaśī. She informs the king that the boy was entrusted to the care of the sage Cyavana since his birth by Urvaśī. Urvaśī was immediately sent for and on her coming, there was a joyous meeting between the fond parents and the long-separated son. Urvaśī, however, immediately remembers Indra's injunction that as soon as the king meets his child born of her womb she was to leave him at once and return to heaven. The reason why she had so long kept the boy away from the father was to prolong her stay with the king as long as possible.

This bad news unnerves and depresses the king to such an extent that he resolves to renounce the throne in favour of his newly found son and retire to the forest. While, however, preparations for the coronation of the prince were in progress, Nārada, the wandering sage, arrives on the scene and relieves the situation by delivering the message of Indra that Urvaśī was to stay with the king till the end of his life and that he was not to retire into the forest, as his help would soon be required in a great

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battle with a fierce demon which was foretold to take place very soon. Āyu is consecrated and raised to the position of *yuvarāja,* i.e. heir apparent and thus the plot ends happily as all dramatic plots should end according to Bharata, the great teacher of the dramatic science.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The drama has no plot worth considering. It does not, like *Mālavikāgnimitra,* throw any light on the social life of the people. The heroine is a celestial damsel and the king is almost a semi-divine personality being the great-grandson of Brahmadeva himself. The plot therefore moves in a highly rarefied supermundane atmosphere. The hero is the usual type—a renowned warrior and also a renowned lover. He is also true to the type—courteous, loving, submissive and accommodating to the old denizens of his harem in spite of his fresh love entanglements. Urvaśī is a celestial courtesan, an experienced mature woman and, like her class, bold, possessive and a past master in the art of love. Vidūṣaka is aptly described by the king as प्रमादी वैधेयः (blundering fool). Some shrewd remarks however which he makes in connection with certain interesting situations in the course of the play relieve the uniform monotony of his behaviour.[3] This Vidūṣaka cannot bear comparison with the rascally arch-plotter in *Mālavikāgnimitra* although he happens to belong to the same class.

The language of the play is more polished and expressive than that of *Mālavikāgnimitra,* therefore it is considered the poet's second work in point of order and time. There are some verses of outstanding merit.[4] Babu Aravind Ghosh in his short brochure on Kālidāsa selects Act II. 6

3. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act III, p. 77.
   Vikramorvaśīya Act II, p. 56 :
   लोष्त्रेण गृहीतस्य कुम्भीरकस्य अस्ति वा प्रतिवचनम् ?
4. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act I. 9;
   Vikramorvaśīya Act II. 6, 10;
   Vikramorvaśīya Act III. 15, 19.

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for his special attention and remarks : "It is the same suave and skilful management, the same exquisite, unobtrusive weaving of labial, dental and liquid assonances with a recurrent sibilant note, the same soft and perfect footing of the syllables. We do not find this peculiar kind of perfection in any other master of classical verse. Bhavabhūti's manner is bold, strenuous and external, Jayadeva's music is based upon assonance and alliteration but without restraint, delicacy and disguise". This master craftsmanship of Kālidasa finds its maximum development in *Śākuntala, Raghuvaṁśa* and *Meghadūta.*

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Chapter IV

MĀLAVIKĀGNIMITRA

This drama is important as it may throw some light on the vexed question of Kālidāsa's time. The hero of the dramatic piece is Agnimitra, the son of Puṣpamitra, who ruled Malwa with Vidiśā as its capital between 200 and 150 B.C. as the viceroy and representative of his illustrious father. Puṣpamitra is known to history especially as he led a bitter crusade against the spread of Buddhism in India. Agnimitra himself is not a well-known entity and had it not been for Kālidāsa making him the hero of one of his dramatic works, his name perhaps would have remained almost unknown to future generations. This drama appears to be and is generally considered the first literary production of its kind of the poet, who very probably till then was a person unknown to fame. The works of older poets like Bhāsa, Saumillaka and Kaviputra were popular at the time. The young and ambitious poet was therefore confronted with the problem how best to push his work and himself into public notice. He managed to do so by choosing as the hero of his first drama the ruling prince of a well-known dynasty either during the latter's life-time or more probably a few years thereafter, when incidents of his life were fresh within the memory of the then living generation and his immediate descendants were in power.

The plot of the play, therefore, gives minute and intimate details of certain events and persons in connection with the royal family, obviously because they must have occurred and lived almost before the poet's eyes. The plot of the play is also cleverly woven and reveals to a considerable extent the social and political conditions of that time.

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THE PLOT OF THE PLAY

Agnimitra is the ruling prince of Vidiśā and like other kings of those days, had many wives, chief among whom was Dhāriṇī who was the *Mahārājñī*. She is portrayed as a really noble lady in every respect and fully deserving her position. She had a son named Vasumitra who even at a tender age of about 18 years is appointed to lead the armies of his grandfather commissioned to protect his sacrificial horse. Assuming that Vasumitra was then just about 18 years, Dhāriṇī his mother must have been a ripe matron of not less than 35 years and the king about 40 years of age. Irāvatī is evidently younger in age than Dhāriṇī and a much later addition to the harem. She is portrayed as jealous, conceited, vindictive, somewhat violent in temper and much addicted to drinking. Very probably she is of lowly birth and may have been espoused by the king for her youth, beauty or proficiency in fine arts. The kings in those days always craved for and were in search of fresh youth and beauty.

The Vidarbha (ऋथकैशिक) country was at the time afflicted with internecine feuds. Yajñasena, a scion of the royal family, had usurped the throne and had driven away his cousin Mādhavasena, who presumably was the rightful heir to the throne. The latter, therefore, sought an ally and friend in Agnimitra to whom he offered his sister Mālavikā in marriage. While proceeding to Vidiśā with Mālavikā with his entourage, he was attacked on the way by a lieutenant of Yajñasena who guarded the frontier, and was imprisoned. In the midst of the attack and confusion which followed, Sumati, the minister of Mādhavasena, separated Mālavikā from the crowd and managed to proceed on his way to Vidiśā, having mixed himself with his followers with a travelling caravan of merchants. But misfortune still tracked his footsteps and the caravan was attacked by a company of fierce freebooters. In the struggle which ensued Sumati was killed and Mālavikā fell into the hands of some foresters who handed her to Vīrasena, the

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brother-in-law and one of the generals of Agnimitra. Vīrasena in his turn sent the girl to Vidiśā as a present to his step-sister, queen Dhāriṇī. Āryā Kauśikī, the widowed sister of Sumati, after the latter's death took to ochre garments, i.e. became a *saṁnyāsinī* or *parivrājikā* and took refuge in the household of king Agnimitra. Thus Āryā Kauśikī and Mālavikā were again brought together by fate, but the former, for certain reasons which she reveals later on in the course of the plot, keeps aloof from Mālavikā, and refrains from informing Dhāriṇī of the royal parentage of the fair foundling. Agnimitra falls in love with Mālavikā immediately he sees her in a picture as one of the personal attendants of queen Dhāriṇī. He longs to see her in person and in the fulfilment of his desire is ably assisted by his नर्मसचिव (counsellor in love affairs) Vidūṣaka, who skilfully provoked a quarrel between the respective dancing and music masters of the king and queen. The queen's dancing master brings his complaint before the king and urges that he himself and his rival may be examined by a competent person or persons with a view to decide which of the two was superior to the other. The king and the Parivrājikā are appointed as a committee of examiners and gave as their opinion that the quality and excellence of the masters can only be ascertained by the comparative merits of their respective pupils. Gaṇadāsa the queen's music master, being senior in age, is given the first opportunity to show his skill or rather that of his star pupil Mālavikā. The queen who by this time has come to suspect the ulterior motive of the king and his secret agents, tries her utmost to keep Mālavikā away from the king's eye, but before the combined strategy of Vidūṣaka and Parivrājikā she finds herself helpless. The king therefore has his cherished desire fulfilled and sees Mālavikā in her scanty dancing costume in a leisurely fashion. The sight of her marvellous young beauty and exhibition of her delightful and highly artistic dance further inflames the king's passion for the girl.

Fate appears propitious to the king in his love-quest.

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The favourite Aśoka tree of Dhāriṇī does not bear flowers although the spring season is at its height. It is necessary therefore to satisfy its दोहद (craving) which consisted in being sportively kicked by the foot adorned with an anklet of a beautiful young woman. In ordinary course, the queen herself would have carried out this delightful mission, but owing to the carefully planned mischief on the part of the wily Vidūṣaka, she had a fall from the swing resulting in a bad sprain to one of her feet. It therefore became necessary to appoint a proxy and who else except Mālavikā, the most beautiful girl amongst her personal attendants, was worthy to be appointed to that high office ? In the meanwhile Vidūṣaka spreads his net wider and wins over Bakulāvalikā, a clever handmaiden of the queen, to his side. Mālavikā accompanied by Bakulāvalikā goes to Pramadavana to render the desired service to the flowerless Aśoka and there meets the king for the first time. The king was visiting the garden ostensibly to keep an appointment with queen Irāvatī.

While the king is making love to Mālavikā in comes Irāvatī and there is the inevitable explosion. Irāvatī after her highly offensive treatment of the king bitterly complains to Dhāriṇī about what she styles Mālavikā's misconduct and urges upon her the necessity of imprisoning the shameless girl with a view to avoid further mischief and Dhāriṇī succumbs to her importunities and sends Mālavikā and Bakulāvalikā to prison.

Vidūṣaka, the chief wire-puller of the plot, hits upon an ingenious and daring plan to liberate Mālavikā from the prison. Dhāriṇī had strictly enjoined the prison authorities that the miscreants were not to be released unless her messenger produces her signet ring as token of her pardon. Vidūṣaka forthwith feigns a snake-bite and gives out that he was in the throes of death. Dhruvasiddhi the royal physician who also appears to be privy to this conspiracy requires a serpent-shaped ring such as the one worn by Dhāriṇī, to enable him to save the dying Brahmin by performing certain mystic rites for removing the effects

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of snake poison. Dhāriṇī unaware of what was brewing behind her back promptly hands over her ring with the help of which Mālavikā and the other maidservant are released from imprisonment and the former is united with the king in secret.

In the meanwhile Irāvatī feeling penitent at her rude conduct towards the king returns to the scene to make amends and catches the guilty couple, i.e. the king and Mālavikā, almost red-handed. Mālavikā's punishment would have been severe but she was luckily saved by the full-flowering Aśoka which promptly responding to the touch of her foot stood matchless in its wealth of efflorescence. Dhāriṇī who had promised a rich reward to Mālavikā in case of a favourable reaction of the Aśoka to her touch, readily condoned her misdemeanour and took her into favour notwithstanding the proddings of Irāvatī.

In the meanwhile Vīrasena the king's general, who has defeated Yajñasena the Vidarbha prince, is ordered by his master to divide that country into two parts, i.e. the territories on the southern and the northern banks of the Varadā river, and enthrone Yajñasena and Mādhavasena as two independent kings in each division. Vīrasena the victorious general in the meanwhile sends to Vidiśā two girls who were presumably among the attendants of princess Mālavikā and they immediately recognize her and Āryā Kauśikī and in their surprise and consternation reveal the secret and thus queen Dhāriṇī and others realize that Mālavikā was no common girl but a princess of the royal blood of Vidarbha kings. She blames Parivrājikā for concealing from her the high lineage of the princess and is informed by the latter that as according to the prediction of a holy man Mālavikā was destined for lowly service for some time as a necessary condition to her getting a suitable husband, she had deliberately kept for some time the secret of her high birth for the welfare of her beloved princess.

Dhāriṇī, knowing well the king's infatuation for the princess, gives her in marriage to him and thus there is a happy ending of the story.

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CHIEF CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

VIDŪṢAKA

This is the villain of the piece and the chief wire-puller —a veritable Machiavelli or Ārya Cāṇakya. He is not merely an ornamental and official jester as in other dramatic pieces. Throughout the entire range of Sanskrit dramatic literature, another Vidūṣaka of his calibre cannot be found. The whole plot of this drama would crumble away if you eliminate him. His remakable shrewdness and acumen is harnessed for the achievement of one object—the union of his master with the object of his passionate attachment, Mālavikā. With this end in view he has provoked a quarrel between the vain and easily gullible dancing masters and even delayed the presence of Mālavikā on the stage on an apparently silly excuse. He has also accomplished the release of the heroine from her imprisonment and brought about her secret meeting with the king by cleverly feigning a snake-bite. It also appears that he was mainly responsible for contriving the fall of Dhāriṇī from the swing in order to create an opportunity for Mālavikā to ingratiate herself in Dhāriṇī's favour by satisfying the craving of her favourite Aśoka tree.

Some of his observations are shrewd and incisive: "You are like a vulture who haunts the precincts of a slaughter house, greedy of flesh, yet too timid even to secure a morsel for yourself."[1] "Here comes the sugar-ball, antidote as it were for a person afflicted with the effects of excessive indulgence in alcohol."[2] "Let us scamper away from this place before she (Irāvatī) returns here, like Mars who is in the habit of going backward to the same constellation as he had just left behind (when he is far more

1. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act II, p. 33:
भवानपि सूनापरिसरचर इव गृध्र आमिषलोलुपो भीरुकश्च ।
2. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act III, p. 42:
एतत्खलु सीधुपानोद्वेजितस्य मत्स्यण्डिकोपनता ।

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dangerous)."[3] "Moon-light should indeed be avoided by lovers and thieves."[4]

AGNIMITRA (THE KING)

He is true to his type. Indolent, pleasure-seeking, fond of new faces and new sensations. As a rule, studiously courteous to the ladies of his harem, although like others of his class, regardless of their feelings where his amorous cravings have to be satisfied. He behaves with extreme patience and courtesy even when confronted with Irāvatī's offensive and unseemly conduct. His treatment of the defeated Yajñasena is generous as behoved a prince of a proud lineage. He is the son of a well-known and highly capable father and also the lucky father of a brave son who at an early age repulsed an attack of the Yavanas (Greeks) on the southern banks of the Sindhu river while in charge of the sacrificial horse of his grandfather. Beyond this there is nothing to distinguish him from, or place him above, the general level of his class.

DHĀRIṆĪ (THE QUEEN)

This is the picture of a high-born lady and an ideal wife according to the prevailing standard of those days. She is not however free from the jealousy which is inborn in every woman, as is apparent from the great care and trouble she was taking to keep young Mālavikā from the king's eye. When owing to the cunning intrigue of Vidūṣaka, she is faced with the necessity of exhibiting Mālavikā in public, she still puts up a brave fight till the end, to make Mālavikā's exhibition as short as possible. When driven to bay, though usually mild and good-natured, she makes a cutting remark against the king, that he should rather devote his great talents to statecraft than for

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3. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act III, p. 60 :
तद्वयं शीघ्रमपक्रमामः । यावदङ्गारको राशिमिवानुवक्रं प्रतिगमनं न करोति ।
4. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act IV, p. 72 :
कुम्भीलकैश्च परिहरणीया खलु चन्द्रिका ।

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woman-hunting.[5] She tries hard to appoint Parivrājikā as the sole arbitrator and keep away the king from the dancing exhibition and when Parivrājikā herself objects to her sole arbitration she is very much annoyed with her and makes a side remark: "Oh fool of a Parivrājikā, do you think that I am not aware of what is happening before my eyes?"[6] Although owing to the constant proddings of her co-wife Irāvatī she goes to the extent of imprisoning Mālavikā, she sends a message to her (Irāvatī): "It is not proper to succumb to a feeling of jealousy at my time of life."[7] Her anxiety to save Vidūṣaka from the effect of the supposed snake-bite is genuine. She keeps her promise to reward Mālavikā in case her service to her favourite Aśoka proved fruitful, in a manner which, to say the least, is worthy of a generous and high-born princess. Even before she knows the high lineage of Mālavikā, she had decided to give her in marriage to the king who she knows is love-lorn on her account and orders Parivrājikā to decorate Mālavikā in bridal attire.[8] Her conduct to her co-wife Irāvatī is courteous and sympathetic.

According to the moral standard of the present times, Dhāriṇī perhaps may be considered too tame and submissive and wanting in self-respect as she readily panders to the lewdness of the king in consenting to his marriage with Mālavikā. But it is obviously unfair to judge her according to the present moral code.

IRĀVATĪ

Irāvatī is a woman of a much inferior type, very probably selected by the gay king for her youth and beauty

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5. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act I, p. 22 :
यदि राजकार्येष्वीदृश्युपायनिपुणतार्यपुत्रस्य, ततः शोभनं भवेत् ।
6. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act I, p. 20 :
मूढे परिव्राजिके, मां जाग्रतीमपि सुप्तामिव करोषि ।
7. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act IV, p. 79 :
न मे मत्सरस्यैष कालः ।
8. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act V, p. 90 :
भगवति, यदि प्रसाधनगर्वं वहसि, तदृशंय मालविकायाः शरीरे विवाहनैपथ्यमिति ।

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from a comparatively low family or even from an inferior caste. In those days अनुलोम marriages were frequent, for instance Vīrasena the king's general is said to be the queen's वर्णावरो भ्राता meaning her step-brother by a woman of inferior caste (वर्ण). Her violent temper, addiction to drink even during day-time, vindictive nature and vanity,[9] mark her out as a person of inferior extraction. She appears, however, to be the ruling favourite of the king's harem, though owing to the advent of a new powerful attraction in the shape of Mālavikā her reign appears about to end. It is on this account that she is bitterly hostile to Mālavikā. Dhāriṇī's position as the chief queen and the mother of the heir-apparent is unshakable but that of Irāvatī entirely depends on her ability to retain the king's infatuation for her. Irāvatī is far from being a general favourite. Vidūṣaka contemptuously refers to her as *piṅgalākṣī*[10] (grey-eyed = घाऱ्या डोळ्यांची M.), meaning that she must be cruel, treacherous and of a crafty disposition.

Irāvatī appears to be drawn from life.

MĀLAVIKĀ

The same type as Harṣa's Ratnāvalī, patient, loving, submissive, born and ready to be loved. There appears to be a good deal of disparity of age between the king and his *amorosa*. She would have perhaps been a fitting bride for Vasumitra the king's son. But that does not trouble her in the least. She must have, on coming to the king's palace, recognised Āryā Kauśikī, but as if by a mutual secret understanding, she keeps away from the elderly widow who was the sister of her brother's faithful general. She knows that she had been betrothed to Agnimitra and that in a way accounts for her willing sub-

9. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act III, p. 47 :
इरावती : चेटि निपुणिके, शृणोमि बहुशो मदः किल स्त्रीजनस्य विशेषमण्डनमिति । अपि सत्य एष लोकवादः ।
निपुणिका : प्रथमं लोकवाद एवाद्य सत्यः संवृत्तः ।

10. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act IV, p. 63 :
सा खलु तपस्विनी तया पिङ्गलाक्ष्या सारभाण्डभूगृहे गुहायामिव निक्षिप्ता ।

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mission to the king's wishes. When hardly out of her teens she appears to have undergone great hardships and vicissitudes of life, which must have endowed her with great patience and fortitude. Mālavikā is a beautiful, affectionate, patient girl who had to suffer many buffets of fortune before she finds a safe anchorage in Agnimitra's loving arms.

PARIVRĀJIKĀ

Next to Vidūṣaka she is helpful in bringing about the union of the hero and the heroine. In some respects, her character and the part she plays in the development of the plot may bear a somewhat faint comparison with that of Kāmandakī in *Mālatīmādhava*. *Parivrājikās* at that time were in a way a link between the waning Buddhism and the rapidly reviving Hinduism. The latter religion (Hinduism) is well-known to possess an all-absorbing power to assimilate even from rival religious systems some of their good points. *Parivrājikās* were mostly recruited from unmarried women and widows.[11] Āryā Kauśikī is a middle-aged widow of a good family. Later on Hindu widows, as a rule, took to काषायवस्त्रs (ochre-coloured garments), as a token of their retirement from worldly life, but gradually lost the honourable position in society which *parivrājikās* enjoyed in olden days. *Parivrājikās* were generally learned and well-informed and therefore were respected and sought after everywhere. The benediction which Ārya Kauśikī bestowed on the king bespeaks of her deep learning and remarkable literary talent.[12] She is rich in wise sayings.[13]

11. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act V, p. 99 :
पुनर्नवीकृतवैधव्यदुःखया ।
12. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act I. 15 :
महासारप्रसवयोः सदृशक्षमयोर्द्वयोः।
धारिणीभूतधारिण्योर्भव भर्ता शरच्छतम् ॥
13. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act I. 13 :
अतिमात्रभासुरत्वं पुष्यति भानोः परिग्रहादनलः ।
अधिगच्छति महिमानं चन्द्रोऽपि निशापरिगृहीतः ॥
Act. I. 16. The definition of a good teacher.
Act II. 8. The description of ideal dancing.

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She also knows something of medicine and first aid remedies.[14]

She is moreover expert in the art of dressing, toilet and decoration. The queen requests her to put an appropriate nuptial dress on Mālavikā. Parivrājikā uses pure Sanskrit language and not the बालभाषा generally used by ladies. Without seeming obtrusive or impertinent, she is all the while vigilant and tries her best to promote the interests of Mālavikā. One cannot help thinking that the class of *parivrājikās* which embraced ladies outside regular family life, who, being well educated and versatile, devoted themselves to public service and general usefulness, deserves to be revived in some form suitable to modern times.

GENERAL REMARKS

The plot mainly hinges on two incidents: (1) The quarrel between Gaṇadāsa and Haradatta, the music masters. (2) The faked snake-bite. For both of these the scheming genius of Vidūṣaka is mainly responsible. The calamities which befell Mālavikā were usual in those troublous times.

The resistance offered by Dhāriṇī and Irāvatī to the successful accomplishment of the king's amorous intrigues is consistent with human nature and especially with female psychology. The conditions of social life portrayed by the poet, apparently belonged to a period of comparative peace and prosperity of the people, although sometimes marred by internecine warfare. Wines and alcoholic drinks were regarded as a legitimate means of enjoyment and dancing, singing, portrait-painting and other arts incidental to a high level of civilization were flourishing among high-born ladies. There is a reference to Yavanas (Ionians or Greeks) inhabiting the southern bank of the Sindhu river. They must be the Greeks whom Alexander the Great had

14. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act IV. 4 :
छेदो दंशस्य दाहो वा क्षतेर्वा रक्तमोक्षणम् ।
एतानि दष्टमात्राणामायुष्याः प्रतिपत्तयः ॥

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introduced in India. They are called Aśvānīkas, i.e. having many horses in their army. पाश्चात्यs (Westerners) referred to in *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 6 as Aśvasādhanas were also probably Greeks.[15]

The harems of kings were full of intrigues and scheming. The flowering of an Aśoka tree has considerable bearing on the development of the plot. This shows in what great regard trees such as Bakula, Aśoka, Mandāra, Campaka, Cūta, etc., were held.

Both in *Ratnāvalī* as well as here, a monkey is represented as creating an alarm and diversion at an opportune time.

Slavery appears to have prevailed in a mild, humane form, as females and males having special qualities were sent as presents to the royal households.

Although this dramatic work is considered and appears to be from internal evidence the first poetic and dramatic effort of the poet, it bears undoubted traces of his masterly genius. Most of the verses are smooth-running, rhythmical and characterized by a high level of poetical craftsmanship. The readings in some places, however, appear to be faulty or incorrect and wanting in perspicuity. The polished and impeccable style of *Śākuntala* was still to be reached and was in the course of development. The plot of this play unlike the other two dramatic productions has no mythological origin.

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15. *Vide* Mallinātha's commentary.

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Chapter V

RAGHUVAṀŚA

The genealogy of the solar race as set out in *Raghuvaṁśa* appears to correspond mainly to that given in *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* although *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* must be later in date than Kālidāsa's time.[1] It is still somewhat of a controversial question whether this famous Kāvya ends with the 19th canto. The *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* mentions no less than 37 princes of the solar race after Agnivarṇa. Moreover the end of the 19th canto is considered somewhat abrupt and does not also end with the usual benedictory stanza. In the case of *Kumārasambhava* also the first seven cantos were available and the remaining ones were subsequently found, although the latter may not be the handiwork of our poet.

The central figure of this epic poem is undoubtedly the illustrious king Rāma, to record the history of whose life no less than six cantos of *Rāghuvaṁśa* are devoted and the narrative substance as well as the style of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* is closely followed in these cantos. Rāma is generally believed to have lived in Tretā-Yuga when religion (Dharma) is said to have stood on three legs. In Kṛta-Yuga Dharma stood on four legs, in Dvāpara on two legs and in Kali, the current Yuga, it stands very insecurely on one leg only.

We have discussed in another chapter the question about the age of *Rāmāyaṇa* (Rāmāyaṇakāla) which we think is anterior to that of the great Mahābhārata war. Rāma if at all he is a historical person could not have lived later than the 15th century B.C. and his great-grandfather Dilīpa must therefore be relegated to the 18th century

1. Pp. 384-387 of *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa's* English translation by H. M. Wilson (1840).

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B.C. if we ignore the fabulous period of life ascribed to Daśaratha.[2]

CANTO I

In the 1st canto the readers are introduced to the great king Dilīpa—one of the ideal kings of the solar line along with Raghu, Rāma and Atithi. Elsewhere we have dealt with the poet's ideal of kingship to which some part of this canto has been dedicated. The queen Sudakṣiṇā is childless owing to the curse of Surabhi the divine cow. The king takes his grievance of barrenness or rather sonlessness to his august preceptor Vasiṣṭha and is advised by him to attend upon and serve Nandinī with diligence and devotion so that by her favour he may be able to nullify the effects of her mother's curse. In six beautiful verses (Canto I, vv. 49-53) the poet sketches a charming picture of the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha. Kālidāsa has many apparently contradictory facets. Although he is a masterly exponent of the hedonistic tendencies of his period, sometimes in lurid colouring, his facile pen is none the less skilful in the portraiture of the holy hermitages, i.e. Āśramas of Kaṇva, Vasiṣṭha and other great sages, with their sublime atmosphere of peace, purity, spiritual eminence and blessedness. Modern India is much the poorer in the absence of such resorts of learning, lofty character and pristine purity of life, which even the rich and powerful may visit with bent heads and humble habiliments (विनीतवेषेण) to cleanse themselves of the taint of city life. Vasiṣṭha with his spiritual insight correctly diagnoses the disease and prescribes the remedy for it and the obedient king faithfully and devoutly follows such advice.

CANTO II

The illustrious king attends upon the sacred cow like her very shadow and serves her with exemplary devotion.

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2. *Raghuvaṁśa* X. 1 :
किंचिदूनमनूनर्द्धेः शरदामयुतं ययौ।

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The cow however decided to test his loyalty and devotion and by her divine power created the illusion of having been attacked and menaced by a fierce lion.

The king naturally tried to shoot his murderous dart at the blood-thirsty beast but finds his arm completely paralyzed and pinned down to his shoulders, as the lion is represented to be a servant of the God Śiva converted into the king of beasts and commissioned to protect the pine tree which was watered and reared up by Pārvatī herself against the ravages of wild elephants. In this contretemps the king offers himself as the prey for the hungry lion as a substitute for the cow. Then follows a dialogue between the supposed lion and the king which in literary brilliance and argumentative skill is second only to that between Śiva and Pārvatī in Canto V of *Kumārasambhava*. The king having successfully passed the hard test is blessed by the cow with the speedy prospect of the birth to him of an illustrious and invincible son and thereafter returns to his capital with his queen.

CANTO III

The advancing pregnancy of Sudakṣinā, the king's great solicitude to fulfil even the slightest of her wishes in her delicate condition, the birth of Raghu and its attendant auspicious signs and joyous festivities, Raghu's education and his marriage with fitting brides, are all described by the poet with his usual vigour, terseness and charm of style. Dilīpa thereafter commences the horse sacrifice and releases the sacrificial horse with his son Raghu in company as its protector. This, however, being Dilīpa's hundredth sacrifice, Indra who till then enjoyed the unique title of Śatakratu (the performer of one hundred sacrifices), unable to tolerate a rival to that title, lifted the horse and tried to drag it away to heaven to prevent the completion of the king's hundredth sacrifice. The sudden disappearance of the horse was immediately noticed but as Indra with the horse was invisible Raghu found himself helpless. Nandinī the guardian angel of Raghu by whose favour he was born

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appeared on the scene and endowed Raghu with clairvoyance —a second sight—so that he perceived Indra engaged in abducting the horse. A terrific fight thereupon ensued between Raghu and Indra which, in view of the equal might of both the combatants, ended in an honourable draw.

Dilīpa happy in the realization that his son had become a matchless and mighty warrior, renounced the throne in his favour and repaired to the forest to lead a life of peace, penance and contemplation as was the time-honoured custom of the kings of the illustrious solar race.

CANTO IV

This canto commences with the enumeration of certain qualities of an ideal king with which Raghu was endowed. Raghu, it is stated, fully deserved the august epithet of 'king' as he was whole-heartedly bent upon pleasing his subjects.[3] Although he was instructed by his preceptors in straight as well as in crooked ways of warfare and state-craft, he always resorted to honesty and good faith as the best policy.[4] In vv. 14-24 follows a short but felicitous description of Śarad (the autumnal season) the advent of which was marked by preparations of campaigns of conquest and plunder on the part of powerful kings. These campaigns served to keep up the fighting spirit and good discipline of the army and also replenished the state treasury. Autumn was the fitting time for these excursions because the days cease to be cloudy and become delightful with bright and mellow sunshine, Kāśa flowers spring up everywhere, moonlight shows glamorously resplendent, sugarcane plantations ripen into full harvest, rivers become fordable, roads free from mud and slime and Saptaparṇa

3. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 12 :
राजा प्रकृतिरञ्जनात् ।

4. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 10 :
नयविद्भिर्नवे राज्ञि सदसच्चोपदर्शितम् ।
पूर्व एवाभवत्पक्षस्तस्मिन्नाभवदुत्तरः ॥

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trees put forth their full efflorescence.[5] Raghu, therefore, marched forth with six-divisioned army for the conquest of the four quarters.

We have elsewhere fully dealt with the itinerary of Raghu in his victorious march. Opinion is often expressed that the poet's object in describing this campaign in detail was to delineate the boundaries of the then Indian continent. His inroads into the Persian territory, however, hardly bear out this theory. It is doubtful whether the incidents described in this canto have a historical basis or background. Inexactitude or a defective sense of historical veracity is unfortunately a glaring shortcoming of poets and chroniclers of ancient India. We have alluded to the reference in this canto to the Pāṇḍya kings[6] and also to the Hūṇas[7]. A reference to Mathurā in v. 48 of Canto VI is also obviously an anachronism. This canto is very probably meant to fulfil an important requirement of a Mahākāvya in the shape of strikingly beautiful descriptions of warfare and conquest and at the same time add lustre to the name of the Ikṣvāku kings.

CANTO V

This canto begins with the anecdote of Kautsa (the disciple of Varatantu) who was moving about for collecting the vast sum of fourteen crores of gold coins for being paid as Gurudakṣinā to his preceptor. He visited Raghu who was then reduced to utter penury by his wholesale doling out of his vast wealth to deserving mendicants at the end of the Viśvajit sacrifice. Raghu, however, rather than disappoint the worthy Brahmin, prepares to attack Kubera (God of Wealth) with a view to win from him the required gold. To the surprise of everybody, however, gold coins in heaps rained as it were in his treasury-house which became chokeful of the precious metal. The king pressed the Brahmin to take away the entire lot; the

5. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 14-24.
6. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 49.
7. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 68.

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latter, however, would not touch a coin more than what was strictly required by him for paying his preceptor's fees. Kautsa, amazed at the king's marvellous might and his generosity, blessed him that an illustrious son would be born to him. The blessing bore ample fruit in the birth of Aja who grew up to be the exact image of his father.[8]

Indumatī, far-famed for her matchless beauty, was the daughter of the Krathakaiśika (Vidarbha) king and was about to choose a fitting husband for herself by means of the Svayaṁvara form of marriage (i.e. marriage by voluntary selection of the bridegroom by the bride). Invitation was sent among other kings to Aja to honour the Svayaṁvara festival by his attendance. Aja accordingly started from Ayodhyā and on the way restored to his original form the prince of the Gandharvas, one Priyaṁvada, who as a result of the curse of the sage Mātaṅga was converted into a giant elephant as a punishment for his insolence. In return for this kindness, Priyaṁvada endowed Aja with a very useful missile named Mohanāstra (the missile of stupefaction) which, when discharged, completely paralyzed and rendered unconscious the hostile hordes. Aja reached Vidarbha where he got a right-royal reception.

This canto ends with the wonderful panegyrical anthem sung to awaken the sleeping prince by the royal bards so that he might dress up and attend the marriage pavilion in due time.

CANTO VI

The description of Indumatī-Svayaṁvara is very grand and colourful. The antics of the young eligibles which the poet interprets in his own peculiar cynical vein, Sunandā's sparkling and grandiose descriptions of the illustrious lineage, fine appearance and exploits of each prince as he was presented and introduced in his proper time to the princess, the majestic march of the fascinating bride

8. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 37 :
न कारणात्स्वाद्विभिदे कुमारः प्रवर्तितो दीप इव प्रदीपात् ।

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between the rows of the tensely expectant princes, her last memorable halt before Aja to finally declare the selection of her life's mate, are all set out in detail in the unique and enchanting style characteristic of this prince of poets.

CANTO VII

In vv. 18-28 the marriage rites of the royal couple are described: (1) सरत्नमधुपर्क (the offering of ghee and honey with valuable jewels), (2) joining the hands of the bride and groom in the presence of the ignited holy fire, (3) circumambulation of the holy fire by the couple, (4) लाजविसर्ज (throwing of parched rice in the fire), (5) आर्द्राक्षतारोपण (the applying of wet rice to the foreheads of the bride and groom by the matrons of the family). It is significant that there is not even a remote reference to Saptapadī now regarded as perhaps the most important item of the Brāhma and the Prājāpatya forms of marriage.

The disgruntled and mortified princes conspired to forcibly abduct the bride on the way from Vidarbha to Ayodhyā. Raghu had conquered and humiliated them in his recent military campaign incidental to the horse sacrifice and to add insult to injury as it were, his son had whisked away Indumatī the wonder girl before their very eyes although each one of them fondly hoped that her choice would fall on him. They therefore with their combined forces attacked Aja in accordance with the preconcerted plan. The description of the battle which ensued is of the usual pattern. Aja in spite of his great personal valour was narrowly saved from disaster by the timely use of Sammohanāstra referred to before which was providentially obtained by him from the grateful Priyaṁvada only a few days before. The treacherous princes were reduced to a sorry and helpless plight and utterly routed. The victorious Aja returned to his capital with his beautiful and high-born wife.

CANTO VIII

Raghu in his turn renounced the throne in favour of his capable and brave son and made preparations to retire

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to the penance forest.[9] At Aja's humble request, however, he consented to reside on the outskirts of the capital so as to be in constant touch with his loving son. Raghu spent his last days in practising yogic exercises for getting complete mastery over his five vital breaths and his rebellious sense organs and thus gradually attained to the supreme and incomparable bliss of his union with the Infinite. His son on the other hand consolidated and strengthened his empire, brought his enemies under control and ruled his subjects with justice and mercy. Vv. 16-22 deal with similarities as well as contrasts between the life of a *yogin* and that of a powerful ruling prince.

Aja, secure in the safety and well-being of his subjects, repaired to the gardens on the outskirts of his capital with his queen Indumatī to pass some time in restful enjoyment. A few days after, Indumatī breathed her last from no other cause than a momentary contact with a garland of heavenly flowers which fell from the sky on her body, having been dislodged by a strong breeze from the lute of the sage Nārada. Aja's lamentation at the sudden and inexplicable death of his dear wife is an elegiacal masterpiece of heart-rending pathos, intensified by the appealing recital of reminiscences in connection with his beloved lost one and is equalled only in its supreme craftsmanship by its counterpart of Rativilāpa in *Kumārasambhava*.

After the queen's mortal remains were cremated with royal pomp and ceremonies, the bereaved king repaired to his capital, wan and lustreless like the moon at day-break.[10] He took his loss so much to heart that his preceptor Vasiṣṭha had to send him a message of consolation and advice. The king was informed that his deceased wife was the earthly incarnation of a celestial damsel Hariṇī by name who due to the curse of a sage named Tṛṇabindu

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9. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 71 :
न हि सति कुलधुर्ये सूर्यवंश्या गृहाय ।

10. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 74 :
क्षणदापायशशाङ्कदर्शनः ।

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was ordained to a mortal existence for some years. Thereafter vv. 83-90 contain a metaphysical disquisition as to the nature of Life, Death and the Hereafter; within the brief compass of these remarkably lucid and striking verses the poet has compressed wisdom, sufficient to allay the heart-ache of any ordinary person. The king however was inconsolable and died of a broken heart by resorting to प्रायोपवेशन, i.e. a prolonged and unrelieved fasting to death.

CANTO IX

Daśaratha the father of Rāma was a great and good king. He is said to have lived ten thousand years![11] The well-known kingly vices, viz. hunting, gambling, wine and women, did not prevent him from striving after progressive prosperity.[12] He also performed numberless sacrifices and adorned the banks of Śarayū and Tamasā with innumerable golden sacrificial posts.[13] Vv. 25-47 of this canto are devoted to the description of spring (Vasanta). It can be safely affirmed that the वसंतवर्णन in this canto in its artistic finish and richness, grandeur of ideas, and the haunting music of its verses can be very favourably compared to that in *Ṛtusaṁhāra* which curiously enough strikes one as comparatively flat and uninteresting. Thereafter comes a description of the royal hunt. It must be said, however, that this somewhat lengthy description is much less striking and realistic than the short, racy and vivid treatment of the same subject in the beginning of the second Act of *Śākuntala*. The king was preceded by hunting dogs and beast-catchers (*vāgurikas*). The fires, if any, were extinguished, robbers expelled from their forest haunts, the land levelled as far as possible and new water

11. *Raghuvaṁśa* X. 1 :
किंचिदूनमनूनर्द्धेः शरदामयुतं ययौ ।
12. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 7 :
न मृगयाभिरतिर्न दुरोदरं न च शशिप्रतिमाभरणं मधु ।
तमुदयाय न वा नवयौवना प्रियतमा यतमानमपाहरत् ॥
13. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 20.

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reservoirs constructed at convenient stages.[14] The king was so far carried away by his love of hunting that his attendants could not keep pace with him and he wandered alone in the forest bent upon his favourite frolic. He had, however, to pay a heavy penalty for his excessive attachment to his blood-lust and losing all discretion he killed the son of an old hermit mistaking him in the pitch darkness of the night for a stray elephant in the act of slaking his thirst on the river bank. The hermit cursed the king that he would meet his death due to the shock consequent on his separation from his dear son. Daśaratha who had no male issue till then accepted the curse as a blessing in disguise and returned to his capital.

CANTO X

He thereafter celebrated the पुत्रकामेष्टियज्ञ i.e. sacrifice for the birth of a son; and it happened that about the same time the gods (shining ones) whom the redoubtable Rāvaṇa had vanquished and was subjecting to intolerable tyranny and humiliation, approached the Supreme God Viṣṇu for succour and salvation. Viṣṇu had just awakened from his periodical yogic trance during the Dakṣiṇāyana (the half year during which the sun moves through the winter solstice). Viṣṇu promised to incarnate himself on the earth as one of the sons of king Daśaratha, kill the mighty demon, and thus free the gods from their revolting bondage.

In the meanwhile from the sacrificial fire emerged a god-like personage and presented Daśaratha with a golden bowl containing sweet *pāyasa* (a preparation of milk, rice and sugar) and instructed him to divide it among his three wives.

The popular version which does not agree with that of *Rāmāyaṇa* as well as that given in *Raghuvaṁśa* is as follows: The *pāyasa* was divided into three equal parts, and each one was given to Kausalyā, Sumitrā and Kaikeyī. The last of them being ill-natured and quarrelsome com-

14. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 53.

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plained that her share was smaller than those of her two co-wives and threw it away in anger. A kite hovering near about, whisked off Kaikeyī's discarded portion and flew away with it. A strong breeze, however, made it drop the *pāyasa* in the upturned palm of Añjanī who was practising penance. Having eaten it she became pregnant and gave birth to the mighty Hanūmat who is said to be an incarnation of the God Śaṅkara himself born to help Rāma in his difficult task of destroying the Rākṣasas whose chief was Rāvaṇa. Kaikeyī thus completely deprived of her share became disconsolate and the other two good-natured queens gave her some portion from their respective shares. Kausalyā thereafter gave birth to Rāma, Sumitrā to Lakṣmaṇa and Kaikeyī to the twins Bharata and Śatrughna. This version is doubtless more plausible and consistent with old tradition which exists in some form even at the present date. Regarding the *Rāmāyaṇa* version, see *Raghuvaṁśa* X. 55, 56, 66, 70 and 71.

CANTO XI

When the lads were of tender age (about 14 to 15 years) Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were requisitioned by Viśvāmitra for the purpose of killing the demons in the Daṇḍakā forest who were the chief obstacle in those days to the proper celebration of holy sacrifices. Daśaratha reluctantly consented to allow the lads to accompany the sage on this perilous expedition. Verse 13 is meant to convey that Rāma who was as handsome as the God of Love reached the penance grove known by the latter's name.

After killing Tāḍakā the aweful blood-thirsty demoness and having procured from Viśvāmitra a powerful mantric missile as a reward of the great exploit, the illustrious trio, i.e. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Viśvāmitra, proceeded to Vāmanāśrama and immediately thereafter reached the hermitage of Viśvāmitra. There Rāma killed Mārīca, Subāhu and a host of other demons and on their way to Mithilā where Viśvāmitra was invited to attend the

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Svayaṁvara of Sītā, Janaka's adopted daughter, Rāma restored to her original form Ahilyā the wife of the sage Gautama who had fallen a prey to the deceit of the treacherous god Indra.

Janaka had promised to give in marriage his beautiful daughter to the warrior who would lift up the formidable bow of Śaṅkara and fix an arrow to it. Rāma alone of all the other kings present at the Svayaṁvara lifted and broke asunder the gigantic bow which usually required a large number of strong men to move from place to place and Sītā was thereafter given to him in marriage. At the same time Urmilā, Śrutakīrti and Māṇḍavī were also married to Lakṣmaṇa, Śatrughna and Bharata respectively.

Paraśurāma, the avowed enemy of the Kṣatriyas who is said to have extirpated their race twenty-one times, hearing of this extraordinary exploit of the young rising Kṣatriya warrior, met Rāma on his way to Ayodhyā and challenged him either to a single combat or to handle and string his own bow as an alternative. Rāma easily lifted the bow, stringed it and fixed thereon an arrow. Paraśurāma, having realized that he had met more than his match, retired from the scene with as good a grace as he could manage.

Daśaratha, thereafter, happy at what he considered a lucky escape of his beloved son from the hands of the implacable enemy of his race, proceeded to his capital.

CANTO XII

This canto which deals with the most important events of Rāma's life is characterized with a remarkable terseness, precision, and purity of phrase which unmistakably remind one of the classic style of Vālmīki's great epic and was very probably inspired and moulded by its close study by the poet. The events in this canto move forward with an almost giddy rapidity which leaves the reader almost breathless.

The chapter begins with the preparations for the coronation of Rāma as the heir-apparent to the throne of

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Ayodhyā and ends with the killing of Rāvaṇa after a strenuous fight and the recovery of the captive Sītā who is declared chaste by the ordeal of fire. In between these two great events, incidents like the exile of Rāma, the heroic incorruptible loyalty and affection of Bharata to his eldest brother, the killing of the huge giant Virādha, Rāma's stay in Pañcavaṭī, the disfigurement of Śūrpaṇakhā for her impertinence, the destruction of Khara and Dūṣana the chief lieutenants of Rāvaṇa in the Daṇḍakā forest, the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa, Rāma's alliance with the monkey king Sugrīva and Hanūmat, the general of his army, the crossing of the Indian Ocean by means of a hastily improvised bridge, the fierce war with Rāvaṇa and his mighty host, are as it were catalogued in quick succession.

CANTO XIII

This canto begins with the description of the route from Laṅkā to Ayodhyā which Rāma traversed in the wonderful airship of Kubera (i.e. the Puṣpaka). It is difficult to ascertain definitely whether this delineation of the southern part of the Indian continent was prior to or after his description of its northern portion in his lyrical masterpiece of *Meghadūta*. It will be readily conceded however that the topographical survey in this canto is much more sketchy and superficial than that in *Meghadūta* which constitutes the main charm of that great poetical work. Probably the poet's acquaintance with the southern part of India must have been much more scanty, vague and superficial. The canto begins with a well-deserved tribute to the immensity, grandeur and richness of the ocean. Graphic and realistic descriptions of the manner in which the giant-fish मातङ्गनक्र (whale) feeds himself, of the huge serpents lying on the sandy seashore being occasionally deluged by the in-rushing tide of the sea, and sometimes discernible to the eye merely on account of the resplendence of the jewels in their heads, of the coral reefs where the conches dashed by strong currents are caught in the former's pro-

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jecting points, a cloud resting on the surface of the ocean and itself revolving by the force of its eddying currents and, for the moment, presenting the illusion of its vast waters being churned again by the Meru mountain, all these invest this canto with an almost epic beauty and majesty of style and are an index to the poet's wonderful powers of observation and graphic description. The tracts of southern India adjoining the ocean adorned with the wealth of betelnut and cocoanut trees, laden with abundant fruit, the Janasthāna region which witnessed the agonies of Rāma due to his tragic separation from his beloved wife still fresh in his memory, the familiar Pampā lake, Pañcavaṭī, Agastyāśrama, Pañcāpsaras lake, Citrakūṭa and lastly the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna near Prayāga described with a plenitude, vigour and wealth of similes almost reminiscent of the efflorescent style of Bāṇabhatta, are some of the landmarks of the memorable journey of Rāmabhadra from the scene of his recent great exploits at Laṅkā back to the capital of his empire.

It is difficult to understand how in verse 20 त्रिमार्गगा (Ganges) is mentioned as drying up the perspiration on Sītā's face by her cool breezes. Perhaps the airship was travelling so very high up in the sky that the heavenly Ganges might have been near enough to soothe the august travellers with its refreshing breezes. The Pañcāpsaras lake, if it ever existed, is now difficult to identify. This route, unlike that of the cloud messenger in *Meghadūta*, is interspersed and dotted with holy Āśramas of great sages. Even in *Meghadūta* the poet does not forget to mention the temple of Mahākāla, the foot-prints of the God Śiva (शिवचरणन्यास), and Devagiri, the residence of Kumāra—which occasional pious references doubtless tone down the prevailing somewhat hedonistic tenor of the poem.

Verse 78 of the canto is likely to linger in the readers' memory. When Bharata bowed down and touched Sītā's feet with his head, the poet aptly remarks, it was difficult to decide which one of them was more worthy of

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reverence, viz. the head of Bharata with its matted hair allowed to grow owing to his great loyalty to his elder brother or the holy feet of Sītā which sternly repulsed the advances of the wicked Rāvaṇa.

CANTO XIV

Rāma was installed on the royal throne of Ayodhyā with all due pomp and ceremony. The monkey chiefs and Rākṣasas were honoured with the farewell worship at the hands of queen Sītā herself in recognition of their meritorious services in times of stress and difficulty and were allowed to return to their respective destinations. Rāma who was a vigilant and dutiful king had sent about spies to ascertain news about the condition of his subjects as well as their wants and grievances. One of such spies named Bhadramukha very reluctantly informed the king of a blasphemous scandal arising out of Sītā's prolonged stay in the palace of Rāvaṇa. This unmerited calumny and suspicion about the chastity of Sītā was an overwhelming blow to Rāma and he felt certain that the scandal would spread like oil on the smooth surface of water unless he forthwith decided to renounce Sītā and exile her out of his capital. He therefore ordered Lakṣmaṇa to carry out the unpleasant task. She was therefore conveyed outside the city and left in a tenantless tract nearabout the Āśrama of the sage Vālmīki. Sītā's message to Rāma conveyed through Lakṣmaṇa on the discovery of her cruel husband's treacherous and undeserved treatment of herself[15] is full of deep pathos and is a dignified and spirited protest. Vālmīki soon discovered the grief-stricken and much-wronged queen, consoled her, took her under his care and protection and conveyed her to his Āśrama. Rāma's treatment of his virtuous wife as well as his decapitation of Śambuka for no other crime than his bold encroachment on what was considered the exclusive privilege of the Brahmins have already been commented upon elsewhere.

15. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 60-67.

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It must, however, be remembered that even Rāma must be judged by the moral standards of his own times which may have left him no other alternative but to act in the way he did.

CANTO XV

The ascetics living on the banks of the Jumna approached Rāma and complained that their sacrifices were devastated by the demon Lavaṇa and his wicked followers and Śatrughna was therefore ordered to kill the sacrilegious monster. Śatrughna started from Ayodhyā and passed on his way the Āśrama of Vālmīki where he received the happy news that Sītā had given birth to twin sons. Reaching the city of Madhūpaghna he fought with and killed Lavaṇa. He thereafter founded the city of Mathurā on the bank of the Jumna. The sons born of Sītā's womb were named Kuśa and Lava by Vālmīki and were reared and educated by him.

Thereafter a Brahmin visited the royal palace and laid the corpse of his prematurely deceased son at the door step, filled the air with his lamentations and openly accused the king of having brought about the death of his son by his sins! When therefore Rāma was on the point of invading the God of Death to bring back to life the Brahmin's son, a bodyless voice informed him that the premature death was the result of some sinful conduct against the well-established rules of caste. He thereupon traversed the country in his airship Puṣpaka in search of the person guilty of this gross sin, found a Śūdra practising penance in Daṇḍakāraṇya and promptly cut off his head as punishment for his transgression.

Thereafter follows the discovery of the royal princes Kuśa and Lava in the Āśrama of Vālmīki. Rāma, thereupon, as a mark of gratitude for Vālmīki for offering a timely asylum to Sītā and bringing up and educating his sons, made a present to the sage of his entire kingdom. Vālmīki had no use of the kingdom, but he made a request to the king to reinstate and accept Sītā as his queen. Sītā

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was accordingly brought before the assembled citizens of Ayodhyā and was asked to prove again her chastity to their satisfaction. The proud and saintly princess, unable to bear this last rude insult, sought refuge in the bosom of her mother—the Earth. This portion of the canto is impressively pathetic and unforgettable and shows to great advantage the lofty character of the noble and spirited queen. The concluding portion is dedicated to the Nirvāṇa or ascension to heaven of the divine Rāma along with his brothers and such of the citizens of Ayodhyā as chose to accompany him. Before his retirement from earthly existence Rāma, to avoid the possibility of internecine disputes, divided the empire among his own sons and those of his brothers. He installed his two sons Kuśa and Lava respectively at Kuśāvatī and Śarāvatī. Aṅgada and Candraketu, the sons of Lakṣmaṇa, were made the overlords of Kārāpatha. Takṣa and Puṣkala, the sons of Bharata, were enthroned at Takṣaśilā and Puṣkalāvatī. The exact location of some of these places is still left in doubt.

CANTO XVI

The opening part of this canto presents the presiding deity of the city of Ayodhyā visiting Kuśa at night-time in his bed-chamber and describing her woe-begone and desolate condition due to her abandonment by the king. The contrast between Ayodhyā as it was during the time of his great ancestors and that after Kuśa abandoned that age-old city and made Kuśāvatī his capital, is undoubtedly one of the beauty spots of this great epic composition and may be compared to the description of the pitiful condition of Amarāvatī due to the wanton ravages of Tārakāsura.[16] Kuśa granted the request of the deity and left Kuśāvatī for Ayodhyā crossing the Vindhya mountain on the way. The devastated and deserted Ayodhyā was speedily rehabilitated in its original prosperity and grandeur.

16. *Kumārasambhava* XIII. 33-41.

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Grīṣma-Varṇana comes next after this[17] and thereafter the water-sport (जलविहार) of the king is described in some detail. On coming out of the river Kuśa finds that the precious armlet presented to Rāma by the sage Agastya and coming to him, his eldest son, as an heirloom, has disappeared from his arm. A thorough search in the water of the Śarayū is made but without success. It was reported to the king however that the ornament was snatched away by the serpent Kumuda who was residing in the river and with a view to recover the auspicious and valuable jewel, Kuśa prepares to make use of the terrible Garuḍāstra to chastise the supposed guilty serpent. As a matter of fact the ornament was innocently taken by young Kumudvatī (the sister of the serpent Kumuda) who had no idea as to what it was and who was its owner. Kuśa being made aware of this fact withdrew the terrible missile and at the request of Kumuda married his sister Kumudvatī who subsequently became the mother of the famous Atithi to whom the next canto is devoted. Kuśa was killed in his fight with the demon Durjaya.

CANTO XVII

Atithi along with Dilīpa, Raghu and Rāma was one of the four great kings of the Raghu race who according to the poet fully satisfied his great ideal of kingship and with reference to whom the poet has expounded his code of political ethics and ethical politics. The canto opens with the coronation ceremony of Atithi. The rest of this canto is devoted to supplementing and completing the poet's description of an ideal king.

CANTO XVIII

This canto is a catalogue and brief description of the kings of the solar race from Atithi to Agnivarṇa, about 22 in number. This chapter is full of tiresome alliterations and is comparatively deficient in literary craftsmanship

17. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 44-53.

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except perhaps as regards the description of the child monarch Sudarśana in the concluding part.

CANTO XIX

Kālidāsa only in two places in his works has entered into minute details of sex life—in *Kumārasambhava* Canto VIII and in the present canto. His detailed and somewhat too realistic description of Sambhogaśṛṅgāra (sentiment connected with sexual enjoyment) in *Kumārasambhava* has been commented upon elsewhere.

In the case of Agnivarṇa the objection of impropriety and irreverence (पावित्र्यविडम्बन) as in the case of Śaṅkara in *Kumārasambhava* does not exist. It must be said, however, that Agnivarṇa even in his extreme moral degradation does not descend to the depth of depravity shown by some of the kings of Kashmir as described in Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* of whom that poet says that he had to desist from continuing further the descriptions of their brutal licentiousness and lechery as he had no desire to befoul and pollute the Goddess of Language. Agnivarṇa does not appear to overstep the limits of and encroach upon the sacred precincts of marital rights. His harem contained plentiful wives and his wayward mind does not travel much beyond the Nartakīs i.e. dancing girls of the palace.[18] In verse 25 the poet essays to describe or rather suggest some sexual postures such as Harivikrama (the lionine posture), Dhenuka (the cow and bull posture) and Karipadākhya-Bandha etc. Similarly in verse 32 कण्ठसूत्रालिङ्गन (close embrace or necking) is referred to. As a result of his excessive sexual indulgence Agnivarṇa is said to have contracted consumption or wasting disease (राजयक्ष्मा) which ends in his premature demise. A realistic touch is added at the end of this canto, that the ministers concealed the king's illness from his subjects and gave out that "in those days he was busy performing sacrificial rites for the birth of a son". His death also was kept a close secret and he was hastily cremated in the palace grounds. One of his

18. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 19.

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queens who was found to be pregnant was immediately placed on the throne.

There appears little doubt that the poet has included in the sedate, sober and highly dignified "Tale of the Descendants of Raghu" the last canto (XIX) giving detailed description of amorous excesses of Agnivarṇa for the express purpose of proclaiming to the world the outstanding object lesson conveyed therein regarding the deadly results of uncontrolled and recklessly pursued lasciviousness and lechery.[19] Compare with the above, Bhagavadgītā II. 62-63.[20]

The abrupt and tragic ending of this canto is considered by some scholars to be due to the fact that Kālidāsa being a contemporary of Agnivarṇa had necessarily to discontinue the further description of the solar race and for this reason he is placed by them so far back as the 8th century B.C.! Some, however, think that Kālidāsa has written more cantos of this epic which may be discovered in course of time just like the cantos of *Kumārasambhava* from the 8th to the 17th.

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19. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 49 :
स्वादुभिस्तु विषयैर्हृतस्ततो दुःखमिन्द्रियगणो निवार्यते ।

20. ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
सङ्गात्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥
क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥

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Chapter VI

KUMĀRASAMBHAVA

The theme of *Kumārasambhava* is the birth of Kumāra, the son of Śaṅkara and Pārvatī and the destroyer of Tārakāsura. It is not exactly known from what source Kālidasa borrowed the main theme about the birth of Kumāra. The story appearing in *Skanda-Purāṇa* in this respect appears to tally with that of *Kumārasambhava.*[1] But *Skanda-Purāṇa* being of a much later date than Kālidāsa's time, it could not have been the source of his inspiration.

Although some features of this story are strikingly fantastic, such as the circumstances attending the birth of Kumāra and his engaging the mighty demon Tāraka in mortal combat when he was only six days old, Kālidāsa does not appear responsible for this curious fantasy as he appears to follow some traditional and well-known theme in vogue in his time. It is said that this work is proof enough of the poet's Śaivite tendencies and predilections. It must be noted, however, that he himself appears to be keen in combating such an assumption as he solemnly declares that there is no distinction between Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva and that they are divinities of equal importance.[2]

CANTO I

The first canto opens with a grand and impressive description of the king of mountains, the Himālaya, which in the words of the poet "is the measuring rod of the

1. *Skanda-Purāṇa.*
2. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 44 :

एकैव मूर्तिर्बिभिदे त्रिधा सा सामान्यमेषां प्रथमावरत्वम्
विष्णोर्हरस्तस्य हरिः कदाचिद्वेधास्तयोस्तावपि धातुराद्यौ ॥

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Earth". The expression "पूर्वापरौ तोयनिधी वगाह्य" is, however, merely a poetical fiction as no portion of this mountain has ever touched the Arabian sea. The Siddhas (a class of semi-divine beings) are described as enjoying the cool shades of the flanks of this great mountain but when oppressed by torrential rains they resort to its sunny heights far above the cloud level.[3] This magnificent description must have come from the pen of a poet who was no stranger to the grandeur and fascination of the famous Himālayan scenery.

As a description of the beauty of a young blooming girl vv. 33-49 are incomparable though sometimes marred by the usual stunts and conventions generally favoured by Sanskrit poets.

The splendid अर्थान्तरन्यास of v. 59 deserves to pass into a useful proverb. A man worth his salt disdains to run away from temptations but loves to grapple with and conquer them.[4] A life full of inhibitions results in impotence and imbecility.

The first canto speaks of the birth of Pārvatī, the advent to the Himālayan regions of Śaṅkara for practising penance and Pārvatī's attendance on him with the permission of her father.

CANTO II

This canto opens with a panegyric to Brahmā the creator of the universe who is approached by the gods to solicit his succour against the unbearable tyranny of the all-conquering Tārakāsura.[5] This praise of Brahmā is in the stilted and stereotyped style characteristic of such devotional outpourings and has its counterpart in Canto X of *Raghuvaṁśa* where the God Viṣṇu is extolled for a

3. *Kumārasambhava* I. 5 :
आमेखलं संचरतां घनानां छायामधःसानुगतां निषेव्य ।
उद्वेजिता वृष्टिभिराश्रयन्ते शृङ्गाणि यस्यातपवन्ति सिद्धाः ॥

4. *Kumārasambhava* I. 59 :
विकारहेतौ सति विक्रियन्ते येषां न चेतांसि त एव धीराः ।

5. *Kumārasambhava* II. 3-15.

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similar purpose. Brahmā, however, informs them that it is not for him to destroy Tāraka who had been endowed by himself with invincible power in order to save the universe from being burnt up by the intense fire of his prolonged and amazing austerities[6] and to induce him not only to give them up but to drive him, inebriated with power, to sinful excesses and thus meet his well-deserved destruction and that it was not proper for him to cut down even the poisonous tree which he himself had planted. He, however, advised them to try and induce Śaṅkara to marry and give birth to a mighty son who alone could destroy Tāraka. Indra therefore invokes the aid of the God of Love (Madana) for helping him to yoke the king of the yogins (Śaṅkara) to the chariot-wheel of married life.

CANTO III

Madana attending in response to Indra's call, boasts about his irresistible and all-conquering prowess and unconsciously digs a pit for his engulfment by his reckless bragging that he could, if necessary, successfully assail the supposed invulnerable virtue of the God Śaṅkara himself. Indra promptly takes him at his word and he is forthwith saddled with the dangerous task of tempting the terrible god to deviate from his chosen path of celibacy and penance.

Madana, thereafter, proceeds to the forest glade high up in the Himālayas accompanied by his able co-adjutant Madhu (Vernal Season) and also by his loving anxious wife Rati who is painfully aware of the immensity of the perilous task her husband has undertaken. Madhu (Vernal Season) descends in all his glory and glamour in that particular part of the mountain tract and creates an entrancing and intoxicating atmosphere and background suited to the free play of amorous sentiment and passion. Madana sees the Great God sitting in his yogic posture (Vīrāsana) under the shade of pine trees, screened all around with tiger skins, his matted hair coiled and tied up with serpents, with

6. *Kumārasambhava* II. 56.

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his terrible third eye half-closed yet emitting a menacing flame of lambent fire. So awe-inspiring was the sight, that through sheer terror the bow slipped to the ground from the shaking hands of the audacious intruder and very probably he would have given up the mad venture had not Pārvatī with her incomparable maiden beauty approached the scene with a view to attend upon the Great God.

Encouraged by this timely and invaluable help Madana took courage in both hands and aimed his arrow at the unconscious ascetic, just emerging out of his deep yogic trance. The presence of Pārvatī before his eyes, the enervating and maddening effect of spring-time manifesting itself in all its lovely splendour on all sides and the arrow aimed at him by the desperate Madana somewhat shook the equilibrium of even his divine mind. Becoming aware of this sudden derangement, he naturally looked around to ascertain the cause of his suddenly ruffled condition and sighted Madana in the very act of discharging his arrow at himself as its sole target. In his supreme wrath at this bold and sacrilegious act, the devastating fire from his third eye flared up in a sudden and terrific flame and burnt Madana to ashes.

Himālaya hurriedly lifting up his affrighted daughter hied away from the spot to save her from possible harm, appearing like a huge elephant stampeding away at great speed with a lotus-bud sticking in his tusk.

CANTO IV

The fourth canto is dedicated to the lamentations of the all-too-suddenly-bereaved Rati which may be said to be an exact counterpart of Aja-Vilāpa in Canto VIII of *Raghuvaṁśa*. Here it is the wife bemoaning the catastrophic end of her husband while in *Raghuvaṁśa* the position is reversed and the husband laments the sudden death of his wife. Madhu (Vernal Season) the inseparable dear friend of the departed God of Love appears on the scene and adds fuel to the burning fire of grief of the forlorn

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Rati who importunes him to prepare and ignite the funeral pyre where she resolves to immolate herself and thus join her dear husband in the other world where, she thought, he was impatiently waiting for her.

She is, however, dissuaded from courting such a tragic end by the Invisible Word which assured her that she was soon destined to be reunited with her husband revived and restored to his proper form.

CANTO V

Pārvatī disconsolate and mortified at what she rightly considered as a slight on, and repudiation of, her beautiful self by Śaṅkara resolved to scale the apparently inaccessible position as the consort of the Great God by means of rigorous austerities of an unprecedented nature. Her penance daily grew more and more intense in privation and bodily suffering so that she at last trained herself to live only on air, water and the nourishing rays of the moon, like the forest trees.[7] She practised पञ्चाग्निसाधन, i.e., the ordeal of surrounding herself on four sides with flaming fires and fixedly staring at the burning mid-day sun even during the hottest part of the year.[8] In the midst of the benumbing cold of mid-winter, she stood immersed in water upto her neck. This inconceivably difficult ordeal continued unabated for several years. Śaṅkara was not unaware of this supreme effort of endurance and self-mortification and decided to respond to the overtures of Pārvatī after submitting her devotion to a skilfully devised test. He assumed the form of a young Brahmin anchorite and paid a visit to Pārvatī. As is usual in the case of a Brahmin who is by temperament inquisitive and eager to poke his nose everywhere, he boldly enquired into the cause of the un-

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7. *Kumārasambhava* V. 22 :
अयाचितोपस्थितमम्बु केवलं रसात्मकस्योडुपतेश्च रश्मयः ।
बभूव तस्याः किल पारणाविधिर्न वृक्षवृत्तिव्यतिरिक्तसाधनः ॥

8. *Kumārasambhava* V. 20.

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exampled austerities practised by a princess born to great affluence and a lofty position and questioned Pārvatī on the subject. The simple-minded girl informed him of her high-mounting ambition, when the impudent Brahmin boy feigned utmost surprise at what he pretended to consider her most unsuitable choice of a husband and bluntly reminded her that Śaṅkara led a perfectly odious and eccentric life, besmeared his body with ashes of the dead, wore serpents round about his arms and neck, rode an absurd old bull, habitually frequented cemeteries and such unholy places and therefore it would be nothing short of a catastrophe if she foolishly married this indigent and eccentric old ascetic. Thereafter follows a highly interesting dialogue which for its clever argumentation, skilful fencing, and ticklish humour inherent in the situation itself, is almost unequalled in the entire range of Sanskrit literature.

Śaṅkara, at last, completely convinced of the indomitable will and unflinching devotion of Pārvatī, declares himself beaten and becomes her devoted slave.

CANTO VI

Suitable emissaries and negotiators for the grand alliance between the Supreme Ruler of the three worlds and the daughter of the king of mountains, could only be the seven divine sages residing in celestial quarters in high heavens and Śaṅkara invokes their assistance to solicit on his behalf the hand of Pārvatī from her august father. The seven sages, of course, feel themselves highly honoured by this great trust reposed in them by the God of Gods and forthwith fly to Oṣadhiprastha, the Himālayan capital. The description of the mythical city of Oṣadhiprastha is very much on the same lines as that of Alakā in *Meghadūta*. Himālaya is overjoyed at the realization of his long-cherished dream of becoming the father-in-law of Śaṅkara and eagerly consents to the glorious union. The fulsome and somewhat longwinded descriptions of the Saptarṣis, Oṣadhiprastha and Himālaya are along the usual lines of a Mahākāvya.

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CANTO VII

The auspicious day for the marriage of Pārvatī was fixed during the period of the full moon (शुक्लपक्ष) when Jāmitra (लग्नात्सप्तमं स्थानम्) position was free from intrusion from any other planets (ग्रहराहित्यं शुद्धिर्वा). The सप्तमस्थान in the horoscope is styled Madanasadana and it should also be free from the presence of any other planets at the marriage time (Muhūrta).

The bride is decorated for the auspicious ceremony of marriage at an hour dominated by the sun's influence when the moon was in conjunction with the उत्तरफल्गुनी constellation. Even the nuptials of the Supreme God must be celebrated at an auspicious hour. The sacred bath (मङ्गलस्नान), decoration (प्रसाधन) and other necessary preliminaries of marriage ritual were duly performed. The bridegroom's wonderful and voluntary transformation from an eccentric ascetic to a gay young lover is described in vv. 31-35.

Śaṅkara arrived at the palace of Himālaya and was joyously welcomed with due ceremonial. The hurry and flurry of the ladies of Oṣadhiprastha to reach the windows of their houses overlooking the main thoroughfare of the city to have a sight of the illustrious bridegroom and their appreciative remarks about his unrivalled majesty and beauty[9] are repeated verbatim in *Raghuvaṁśa* in another context.[10] Thereafter marriage was celebrated according to the approved form with appropriate ceremonies, i.e., मधुपक (presenting the bridegroom with honey and curdled milk)[11], अग्निप्रदक्षिणा (circumambulation of the holy fire), लाजविसर्ग (scattering of parched rice in the fire), ध्रुवदर्शन (pointing out the constellation of Dhruva to the bride) and आर्द्राक्षतारोपण (sticking of wet rice to the forehead of the couple by the matrons of the family). It is significant that here also there is no mention of Saptapadī as in Canto VII of *Raghuvaṁśa* which describes the marriage of Aja and Indumatī.

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9. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 56-68.
10. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 5-15.
11. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 72.

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Onwards from this canto Mallinātha's commentary is discontinued and Sītārāma takes his place. It is supposed that Kālidāsa's composition ends with Canto VII and the subsequent portion is the work of some other author. It is true that the first seven cantos of this work are almost faultless and entirely characteristic of Kālidāsa's masterly style. The grand description of Himālaya, the sparkling delineation of adolescent Pārvatī's charms, the panegyric of Brahmā, the heart-rending tale of Tāraka's oppression and tyranny, the woeful condition of Amarāvatī and of the gods, the flippant and boastful picture of the God of Love, the untimely descent of the vernal season on the forest tract where Śaṅkara was practising his penance conveying an inebriating and resistless sex appeal to the entire animal creation, the foolhardy attack of Madana on Śaṅkara and his living cremation in the terrible fire of the latter's third eye, the unforgettable lament of the bereaved Rati, Pārvatī's unrivalled austerities, her severe test by Śaṅkara and the marriage of the divine couple—these incidents following one another in rapid succession hold the reader almost spell-bound. Compared to these first seven cantos the remaining portion of *Kumārasambhava* decidedly shows an inferior craftsmanship, although distinctive touches like the description of the pigeon in the beginning of Canto IX (vv. 2, 3 and 4), the imposing description of Śiva on his jewelled throne (Canto XII, vv. 9-21), the queer and grotesque description of the various mounts of Yama, Agni and others (Canto XIV, vv. 5-12) and of the evil omens which accompanied the ill-fated march of Tāraka to meet Kumāra in fight, considerably relieve the monotony of the last ten cantos of *Kumārasambhava*. From the very name of this great epic it must necessarily be continued until the birth of Kumāra. The portion after the 7th canto may have been composed by an understudy of the poet under or even without his supervision. It will be noticed, however, that the first seven cantos carry the story only upto Pārvatīpariṇaya, i.e., the marriage of Pārvatī, and leave Kumārasambhava untouched. Kumārasambhava is reached

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in Canto X and the remaining cantos are dedicated to Tārakavadha. If the work was to end with Canto VII it would have been styled Śivapārvatīpariṇaya or by some other similar name.

CANTO VIII

This canto is devoted to Sambhogaśṛṅgāra (the sentiment peculiar to sexual enjoyment) incidental to the honeymoon of the newly married couple. It is noteworthy that immediately after marriage it was customary for the bride and the bridegroom to sleep on bare ground, to give up eating salt or other aphrodisiacs (क्षार) and observe strict celibacy for three consecutive nights. Verse 94 of Canto VII only refers to the sleeping on the floor of the newly married couple. In the commentary the extracts given from Āśvalāyana, Yājñavalkya and Kāmaśāstra further develop the idea.[12] This difficult discipline is intended to endow the new couple with the necessary strength of mind and power of self-control and to enable them to avoid the pitfalls of married life arising out of precipitate sex acts before perfect psychic harmony is established between the couple.

It was also customary to reside in the house of the father-in-law for one full month after marriage so as not to cause a sharp wrench to the young bride by too suddenly separating her from her parents.[13] The new son-in-law also gets accustomed to and becomes familiar with the relations of his wife during that period. It is difficult to understand why this salutary custom has fallen out of vogue.

Vv. 1-19 of this canto are devoted to the description of the peculiar and apparently perverse sex psychology of young married girls which the poet describes also in

12. *Kumārasambhava*, p. 142 :
अत्राश्वलायनः—'अत ऊर्ध्वं (विवाहादूर्ध्वं) अक्षारालवणाशिनावधःशायिनौ ब्रह्मचारिणौ स्याताम्' इति। अत ऊर्ध्वं विवाहादूर्ध्वम्। आ त्रिरात्रादिति शेषः। 'त्रिरात्रं द्वादशरात्रं वा'। (याज्ञ० प्रा० १.८)

13. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 20.

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Mālavikāgnimitra[14] and in other places.

Śaṅkara on leaving his father-in-law's residence resorted to the Gandhamādana forest which by its matchless scenic beauty and invigorating climate was an ideal place for the honeymooning of the celestial couple. It will be remembered that in *Vikramorvaśīya*, Purūravas also went to the same beautiful haunt of lovers accompanied by Urvaśī. The custom of honeymoon appears to have prevailed among the ancient Indians long before European races became civilized.

Here Śaṅkara describes for the delectation of his beloved wife the kaleidoscopic and fascinating colours of the sunset, the gradual oncoming of the peaceful evening and the rise of the glamorous moon investing the wood-land scenery on every side with a weird magic enchantment. Although an epic composition should be embellished in appropriate places with descriptions of natural scenery this prolonged and laboured discourse clearly appears somewhat out of place.

Thereafter the presiding deities of the Gandhamādana mountain respectfully offer to Śaṅkara a fragrant and highly intoxicating aphrodisiac in the shape of wine which produces its expected effect and the divine couple abandon themselves to unrestrained and prolonged sexual enjoyment. This canto is out of tune with the atmosphere of high spirituality and self-restraint which is naturally expected from the revered parents of the universe. The artistic decency and decorum with which the poet describes the opening love life of Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā offers a striking and pleasing contrast to this orgy of sex-indulgence especially in the case of holy persons from whom it was the least expected. Such inartistic aberrations strengthen

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14. *Mālavikāgnimitra* IV. 15 :

हस्तं कम्पयते रुणद्धि रशनाव्यापारलोलाङ्गुली
स्त्रौ हस्तौ नयति स्तनावरणतामालिङ्ग्यमाना बलात् ।
पातुं पक्ष्मलनेत्रमुन्नमयतः साचीकरोत्याननं
व्याजेनाप्यभिलाषपूरणसुखं निर्वर्तयत्येव मे ॥

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the theory that this and other succeeding cantos may not be the work of Kālidāsa.

CANTOS IX-X

These cantos open with a vivid and realistic description of the pigeon in whose disguise the God Agni presumes to enter the inner apartments of Śaṅkara. The comparison of the cooing of the pigeon to the sweet sound emitted by a young woman in her ecstasy arising from sex union is noteworthy.[15] Agni narrowly escapes the fate of the God of Love in exposing himself to the just wrath of the irascible God by his unwarrantable intrusion in the privacy of the newly wedded couple.

The incidents which lead to the birth of Kumāra are too fantastic and grotesque even for the wild poetic license. The impregnation of Agni with the divine seed, his consequent disfigurement and unbearable agonies, his relief by immersion into the Ganges when the embryo passed into the holy waters of that river whence subsequently it was transferred to the wombs of the six divine matrons who were taking their usual bath in its waters, their hurriedly casting out of the unwelcome faetus among a cluster of reeds where it rapidly developed into a wonder child with six handsome faces—all these make a wild and extravagant saga of divine incarnation quite worthy of a personality who could easily vanquish the redoubtable Tārakāsura, the conqueror of the three worlds, when he was only six days old! After the visit of Agni, Śaṅkara left Gandhamādana and sped to Kailāsa on his fleet mount.

CANTO XI

While Śaṅkara and Pārvatī were enjoying an aerial flight they espied a child prodigy, roundabout whom the God of Fire, the Ganges and six divine matrons were wrangling as to which of them should get his custody and

15. *Kumārasambhava* IX. 2 :
सुकान्तकान्तामणितानुकारं कूजन्तम् ।

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care. The mere sight of the child filled both Śaṅkara and Pārvatī with an intense parental affection and longing. Śaṅkara then informed Pārvatī that the child was their own son whereupon the overjoyed mother swooped down to the earth, embraced the child and took him along with her to Kailāsa where festive celebrations were held in honour of the birth of a son to the divine couple.

The childlike pranks and frolics of the hopeful offspring are thereafter described. Verse 42 may remind the reader of the celebrated verse appearing in *Śākuntala* (Act VII, v. 17).

CANTO XII

Indra realizing that his opportunity had come, proceeds to Kailāsa and solicits the assistance of the six-days-old Kumāra to lead the armies of the gods against their inveterate and formidable enemy. Vv. 9-21 present to the readers a glowing description of the majesty and pomp of the great Śaṅkara enthroned in his Durbar on the Kailāsa mountain. After the usual greetings and kind inquiries, Śaṅkara enjoins his valorous son to accept the generalship of the celestial hordes and destroy the fearful demon.

CANTO XIII

Kumāra thereafter marches forth with the army of the gods to Amaravatī the capital of the gods which had fallen into the hands of the conqueror (Tāraka) and out of which the gods were driven out long since. The heavenly Ganges was crossed on the way and Kumāra paid his due respects to the holy river. On entering Amarāvatī, Kumāra was shocked to witness the pitiful condition of that great and celebrated city due to the wanton vandalism of the barbarous demons and his face glowed with righteous wrath. The contrast between Amarāvatī that it once was and as it existed when the gods again re-entered it led by Kumāra, cannot but remind the reader of the description of Ayodhyā in Canto XVI of *Raghuvaṁśa*.

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CANTOS XIV-XVII

From Amarāvatī, the armies of Indra under the leadership of Kumāra marched on the battlefield. Where the scene of the grand conflict was staged is not made clear by the poet. In Canto XIV, the poet gives a catalogue of the mounts of the various chief gods who accompanied the great General, viz., Indra mounted on the majestic Airāvata, Agni on a ram (meṣa), Yama (the God of Death) on his terrible buffalo, the demon presiding over the south-eastern quarter on a ghost (प्रेत), Varuṇa on a gigantic crocodile, the Wind (Marut) on a fleet deer, the Rudras on giant bulls! The rest of Canto XIV describes the aweful din and stampede of an immense army and the blinding dust and devastation caused by it. In Canto XV it is interesting to note the various ill-omens which beset and marked the path of Tārakāsura to the battlefield. Cyclonic winds throwing the demon hordes in disorder, greedy vultures persistently hovering over the ill-fated army of Tāraka, poisonous black snakes crossing its path, a dark circle surrounding the sun, destructive lightning suddenly falling from a cloudless sky which showered burning charcoal, blood drops and bones, ear-splitting thunder claps and catastrophic earthquakes—these were the portents which nature manifested in order to prophesy the utter destruction of Tāraka and his followers. There is long-drawn-out and somewhat tiresome description of the fierce battle in Cantos XV, XVI and XVII. There are, of course, references to various Astras (missiles) such as Nāgapāśa[16], Vāyavyāstra[17], Agnyastra[18], Varuṇāstra[19] and a glowing description of the havoc worked by the divine Kumāra who at last discharges a miraculous and powerful Śakti which kills the mighty demon and releases the gods from their long continued bondage.

There does not appear any benedictory stanza at the

16. *Kumārasambhava* XVII. 6.
17. „ XVII. 25.
18. „ XVII. 34.
19. „ XVII. 40.

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end of Canto XVII. It will be remembered that some urge that the absence of such a stanza at the end of Canto XIX of *Raghuvaṁśa* is an indication that the work is incomplete. Such an argument loses most of its force from the absence of such a stanza also at the end of Kumārasambhava. It appears that in those days there was no invariable practice of ending every poetic composition with a benedictory stanza.

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Chapter VII

MEGHADŪTA

There is hardly any plot for this poetical work of surpassing beauty. As Parabrahma is said to have sent forth from within Itself this vast and varied universe or, to use a more familiar simile, as the spider weaves his net without any extraneous material, this delightful fantasy is the sole product of the poet's wonderfully fertile imagination.

A young pleasure-loving Yakṣa forcibly separated from his wife by the curse of his master, losing his mental balance, in his helpless and bewildered condition importunes a passing cloud to play the part of his messenger and deliver his love-laden message to his sorrowing wife in the city of Alakā.

This matchless lyric is divided into two parts. The first twelve verses of the first part (*Pūrva-Megha*) are dedicated to the introduction and a brief layout of the theme. In vv. 13-63, the cloud messenger's path from Rāmagiri to Alakā is described. In the second part (*Uttara-Megha*) the first eleven verses give a glowing description of the divinely glamorous city of Alakā. In vv. 12-17 the Yakṣa lovingly enumerates the special features and landmarks by which his residence is to be recognized and identified by his emissary. The Yakṣa thereafter describes his wife in vv. 18-35 and the concluding portion of *Uttara-Megha* contains his message.

A sort of apology for the obvious absurdity of making use of a mere cloud for conveying a message is embodied in the last line of verse 5 of *Pūrva-Megha*.[1] Similar mental aberrations of love-sick persons have often found place in

1. *Pūrva-Megha* 5 :

कामार्ता हि प्रकृतिकृपणाश्चेतनाचेतनेषु ।

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Sanskrit literature.[2] Duṣyanta in *Śākuntala* Act VI scolds the ring for losing its hold on the beautiful finger of Śakuntalā.[3] In *Mālatīmādhava*, the celebrated love story of Bhavabhūti, in Act IX the poet has gone out of his way to indulge in a similar stunt. The Yakṣa's behaviour is therefore in consonance with the prevailing poetical convention.

The cloud, however, has almost all the necessary qualifications of a प्रणयदूत[4] or love-messenger. He is the recognized refuge of love-(or heat-)afflicted persons[5], he is the hope of young women whose husbands or lovers are wanderers from home[6], the generous friend of mountains whose wild conflagrations in summer he quenches with profuse and timely showers[7], born of a lofty parentage[8], one who silently and unostentatiously satisfies the needs of his mendicants[9], a high and trusted officer of Indra and

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2. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act IV.
3. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 206 :
   राजा—उपालप्स्ये तावदिदमङ्गुलीयकम् ।
   Śākuntala VI. 13.
   Śākuntala Act VI, p. 207.
   विदूषकः—गृहीतोऽनेन पन्था उन्मत्तानाम् ।
4. ब्रह्मचारी बली धीरो मायावी मानवर्जितः ।
   धीमानुदारो निःशंको वक्ता दूतः स्त्रियां भवेत् ॥
5. *Pūrva-Megha* 7 :
   संतप्तानां त्वमसि शरणम् ।
6. *Uttara-Megha* 36 :
   यो वृन्दानि त्वरयति पथि श्राम्यतां प्रेषितानां
   मन्द्रस्निग्धैर्ध्वनिभिरबलावेणिमोक्षोत्सुकानि ।
7. *Pūrva-Megha* 17 :
   त्वामासारप्रशमितवनोपप्लवं साधु मूर्ध्ना
   वक्ष्यत्यध्वश्रमपरिगतं सानुमानाम्रकूटः ।
8. *Pūrva-Megha* 6 :
   जातं वंशे भुवनविदिते पुष्करावर्तकानाम् ।
9. *Uttara-Megha* 51 :
   निःशब्दोऽपि प्रदिशसि जलं याचितश्चातकेभ्यः ।

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a quick-change artist who can assume different shapes at will[10], the mainstay of the poor tillers of the soil[11], and is also full of the moisture of human kindness[12].

He is moreover a deeply religious person and has great veneration for Śaṅkara, Pārvatī, Kumāra and similar great divinities. On his way to Alakā he does not forget to pay his homage to the sacred imprints of the feet of Śaṅkara near Haridvāra.[13] At the evening worship of Mahākāleśvara in Ujjain, he even delays his departure in order to serve the God and does duty for the resounding drum accompanying the evening worship by his reverberating thunder ; and investing himself with blood-red colours of the setting sun and resting awhile on the summits of tall trees he creates the illusion of the skin of a freshly-killed elephant dripping with blood upraised and resting on the outstretched arms of the Great God at the time of his terrific Tāṇḍavanṛtya—a memory so dear to his heart.[14] He makes the favourite peacock of Kumāra dance to the tune of his sonorous thunders.[15]

The cloud, however, is not a ब्रह्मचारी (celibate) but decidedly a pleasure-loving gay person, fond of female company and highly susceptible to female charms. His married wife is विद्युत् (lightning)[16] and the rivers are his numerous mistresses[17]. He is attracted by the amorous glances of the beautiful damsels of Ujjain[18] and aspires to

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10. *Pūrva-Megha* 6 :
    जानामि त्वां प्रकृतिपुरुषं कामरूपं मघोनः ।
11. *Pūrva-Megha* 16 :
    त्वय्यायत्तं कृषिफलमिति भ्रूविलासानभिज्ञैः ।
    प्रीतिस्निग्धैर्जनपदवधूलोचनैः पीयमानः ॥
12. *Uttara-Megha* 30 :
    प्रायः सर्वो भवति करुणावृत्तिरार्द्रान्तरात्मा ।
13. *Pūrva-Megha* 55.
14. „ 36.
15. „ 44.
16. „ 38.
17. „ 40.
18. „ 27.

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be the target of the lovely eyes of the ladies of Daśapura[19]. He does not forget to shed his invigorating moisture of love on the drooping and languishing creepers on his way.[20] He is daring enough to sneak into the interior of the palaces of the rich and sacrilegiously pollute the pure surface of the beautiful pictures there.[21] He has however great presence of mind which enables him to effect his escape out of difficult situations, i.e., when the Śarabhas attempt to assail him, he scatters them by a devastating shower of hail[22] and when the celestial dames try to entrap him for use as a shower bath, he promptly frightens them into releasing him by his thunderous roar.[23] The Yakṣa appears to be fully aware of the libertinage and gay character of the cloud and loses no opportunity of reminding him that his wife should be regarded by the cloud as his sister-in-law and that she is an incorruptibly virtuous lady.[24]

The cloud, moreover, has a resounding and impressive voice.

Kālidāsa like Wordsworth is preeminently a nature-poet and presents realistic and beautiful pictures of the changes in nature brought about by the advent or efflux of different seasons of the year. In *Raghuvaṁśa* and *Kumārasambhava* he has somehow or other missed describ-in the rainy season (वर्षाकाल). In *Meghadūta* therefore he has laid the scene of the main incident in the opening monsoon time and thus has created for himself an opportunity of doing full justice to that important part of the year which by providing copious showers fructifies and enlivens the earth and gives fresh life and sustenance to the animal and vegetable kingdom.

The trees which yield their harvest of flowers and fruits in or about monsoon time find due reference in this poem.

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19. *Pūrva-Megha* 47.
20. „ 26.
21. „ 6.
22. „ 54.
23. „ 61.
24. „ 10 :

तां चावश्यं दिवसगणनातत्परामेकपत्नीमव्यापन्नामविहतगतिर्द्रक्ष्यसि भ्रातृजायाम् ।

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The Yakṣa offers Kuṭaja flowers to the cloud when he joyously welcomes its first appearance.[25] After the first showers the Śilīndhras or mushrooms spontaneously spring from the soil.[26] The mango trees with their fully ripened fruits invest the forest tracts with a yellow colour.[27] The Nīpa trees put forth greenish brown blossoms[28] and Kandalīs (miniature plantain trees) put forth their fresh buds. The mountain tracts become fragrant with the blossoming Kakubha (Arjuna) trees.[29] The Ketakas burst out of their coverings and make the fences surrounding the gardens of a pale yellowish colour.[30] The Jambū (*Jāṁbhūḷa,* Mar.) trees overladen with fruits invest the forest regions with a bluish view.[31] The Kadamba trees become adorned with full-blown flowers.[32] Thickets of the Yūthikā creeper (*Jāī Juī,* Mar.) delight the eye after being sprinkled with profuse showers.[33] The Udumbara fruits are being ripened by the cool monsoon breeze.[34] The jewelled rainbow makes

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25. *Pūrva-Megha* 4 :
स प्रत्यग्रैः कुटजकुसुमैः कल्पितार्घाय तस्मै ।
26. *Pūrva-Megha* 11 :
कर्तुं यच्च प्रभवति महीमुच्छिलीन्ध्रामवन्ध्याम् ।
27. *Pūrva-Megha* 18 :
छन्नोपान्तः परिणतफलद्योतिभिः काननाम्रैः ।
28. *Pūrva-Megha* 21 :
नीपं दृष्ट्वा हरितकपिशं केसरैरर्धरूढैराविर्भूतप्रथममुकुलाः कन्दलीश्चानुकच्छम् ।
29. *Pūrva-Megha* 22 :
कालक्षेपं ककुभसुरभौ पर्वते पर्वते ते ।
30. *Pūrva-Megha* 23 :
पाण्डुच्छायोपवनवृतयः केतकैः सूचिभिन्नैः ।
31. *Pūrva-Megha* 23 :
त्वय्यासन्ने परिणतफलश्यामजम्बूवनान्ताः ।
32. *Pūrva-Megha* 25 :
त्वत्संपर्कात्पुलकितमिव प्रौढपुष्पैः कदम्बैः ।
33. *Pūrva-Megha* 26 :
विश्रान्तः सन्व्रज वननदीतीरजातानि सिञ्चन्नुद्यानानां नवजलकणैर्यूथिकाजालकानि।
34. *Pūrva-Megha* 42 :
शीतो वायुः परिणमयिता काननोदुम्बराणाम् ।

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its appearance in the sky.[35] The arable fertile land having been ploughed up and wetted with fresh showers discharges lovely aromatic fragrance.[36] Expansive trees like the Vaṭa and the Pippala become chokeful with the nests of crows and other birds who feed on the householders' bounty.[37] [This verse may be interpreted to convey that the Buddha-vihāras (Caityas) are totally deserted and are full of the nests of birds. Puṣpamitra the king of Malwa was a very bitter enemy of Buddhism and did his best to drive it out of the country. This realistic touch may indicate that the poet was more or less a contemporary of Puṣpamitra and Agnimitra his son whom he has immortalized by making him the hero of his first dramatic production.] The swans are making preparations for migrating to the Mānasa lake.[38]

This description of the monsoon time may be compared to that in Canto II of *Ṛtusaṁhāra* wherein Kandalī, Kadamba, Sarja, Arjuna, Ketakī, Kakubha, Mālatī and Yūthikā have also been referred to as the flora peculiar to this season.

The hero of this charming lyric, the Yakṣa, is a passionate and loyal lover. He has the power of free and unhampered movements throughout the world and is therefore well acquainted with all places therein and can give picturesque and detailed description of the route taken by the cloud from Rāmagiri to Alakā. His power of free movement has been taken away from him by the curse of Kubera. He is also endowed with a philosophic vein and can give utterance to universal truths—"eternal verities"—as follows: (1) "'Out of sight, out of mind' is not a characteristic of

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35. *Pūrva-Megha* 15 :
रत्नच्छायाव्यतिकर इव प्रेक्ष्यमेतत्पुरस्ताद्वल्मीकाग्रात्प्रभवति धनुःखण्डमाखण्डलस्य ।

36. *Pūrva-Megha* 16 :
सद्यःसीरोत्कषणसुरभि क्षेत्रमारुह्य मालम् ।

37. *Pūrva-Megha* 23 :
नीडारम्भैर्गृहबलिभुजामाकुलग्रामचैत्याः ।

38. *Pūrva-Megha* 23 :
संपत्स्यन्ते कतिपयदिनस्थायिहंसा दशार्णाः ।

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true love, which instead of being quenched by long separation and absence, grows more intense and absorbing on that account."[39] (2) "Who is wholly happy or wholly miserable in this world! Like the revolving wheel of a water machine, man's fortunes constantly and alternately move from depth to height and height to depth."[40] His message to his wife is very appealing and pathetic.

The Yakṣa's wife presents all the features of a प्रोषितभर्तृका (grass widow).[41] She wears soiled garments[42], neglects to dress and adorn her tresses[43], sleeps on the ground[44], spends her time in thinking of her absent husband, sketching his likeness, singing songs about his virtues and good looks or talking about him to domestic pets[45].

The time of the year chosen by the poet is the rainy season because according to the time-honoured poetic convention, the विरहिजनs (those who are separated from their loved mates) suffer excruciating agonies during this period. It is supposed that the passion wave is at its height when the trying heat of Grīṣma (ज्येष्ठ and आषाढ) corresponding to June and July is suddenly cooled down by copious showers of the bursting monsoon and all creatures breathe a sigh of relief, contentment and joy.

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39. *Uttara-Megha* 49 :
स्नेहानाहुः किमपि विरहे ध्वंसिनस्ते त्वभोगा-
दिष्टे वस्तुन्युपचितरसा प्रेमराशीभवन्ति ।

40. *Uttara-Megha* 26 :
कस्यात्यन्तं सुखमुपनतं दुःखमेकान्ततो वा
नीचैर्गच्छत्युपरि च दशा चक्रनेमिक्रमेण ।

41. *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* I. 84 :
क्रीडां शरीरसंस्कारं समाजोत्सवदर्शनम् ।
हास्यं परगृहे यानं त्यजेत्प्रोषितभर्तृका ॥

42. *Uttara-Megha* 23.

43. *Uttara-Megha* 21, 28 and 29.

44. *Uttara-Megha* 25 :
तामुद्बिद्रामवनिशयनां सौधवातायनस्थः ।

45. *Uttara-Megha* 22 and 23.

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The great poem is copiously adorned with various figures of speech such as उपमा[46], उत्प्रेक्षा[47], अर्थान्तरन्यास[48], स्मरण[49], भ्रान्तिमत्[50] (विषम), विरोधाभास[51], व्यतिरेक[52], etc., which are superb instances of the poet's matchless fancy and sense of appropriateness.

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46. *Pūrva-Megha* 2, 15, 18, 19, 24, 25, 30, 46, 51, 52, 57, 58, 59 and 63. *Uttara-Megha* 1, 21, 26, 27 and 32.
47. *Pūrva-Megha* 14, 28, 29, 36, 40, 41, 50. *Uttara-Megha* 6, 32.
48. *Pūrva-Megha* 5, 6, 20, 28, 53 and 54. *Uttara-Megha* 37, 38, 46, 49 and 51.
49. *Uttara-Megha* 14.
50. *Uttara-Megha* 5. This verse may also be taken as an example of विषमालंकार i.e. when an effort fails and an evil result follows. The supposed lamps are not extinguished, but shame and discomfiture is the only result.
51. *Uttara-Megha* 40.
52. *Uttara-Megha* 41.

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Chapter VIII

RTUSAṀHARA

This poetic composition consists of about 144 verses, its subject being the description of six seasons of the Indian year, the changes brought about in Nature by the advent and efflux of each season and its psychological effect on the animal world with special reference to the rising and falling tide of human erotic passions.

One special feature of the work are the numerous readings which are offered with reference to almost every verse and hence create a grave doubt regarding the genuineness of the text of the original composition.

The question has often been seriously raised whether this "synopsis of the seasons" is really and truly the literary production of Kālidāsa. A careful perusal of the work, however, leaves little doubt, that this attempt is the outcome of the immature genius of the poet, struggling for its expansion and tentative expression, as it contains the unmistakable germ of his future greatness, which later on, dazzled the world by the production of such masterpieces as *Śākuntala, Raghuvaṁśa* and *Meghadūta.*

The book also contains so many striking similarities of fancy and phrase with the recognized works of Kālidāsa, that there should exist no doubt regarding the authorship of *Ṛtusaṁhāra.*

The very opening verse reminds the reader of v. 3 of Act I of *Śākuntala.*[1] So also v. 7 of Canto II of *Ṛtusaṁhāra* corresponds closely with v. 21 of Act V of *Śākuntala.*

Also compare v. 10 of Canto II of *Ṛtusaṁhāra* with v. 37 of *Pūrva-Megha* and v. 3 of Canto III of *Ṛtusaṁhāra* with vv. 40 and 41 of *Pūrva-Megha* and v. 52 of Act IV of

1. Compare *Ṛtusaṁhāra* I. 1 with *Śākuntala* I. 3.

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Vikramorvaśīya, where the same idea is further laboriously developed.

Moreover striking verses like I. 9 and VI. 10 of this book are, as it were, an earnest of the potential eminence of the great poet.

For further striking resemblance also note *Ṛtusaṁhāra* II. 11 with *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 38.

On the whole, therefore, it is safe to hold that *Ṛtusaṁhāra* is the handiwork of Kālidāsa first in order of time and last in order of merit.

CANTO I: *GRĪṢMAVARṆANA*

The first canto describes Grīṣma or the hot season. Grīṣmavarṇana is also attempted in Canto XVI of *Raghuvaṁśa*.[2] The ideas contained in *Ṛtusaṁhāra* I. 2, 28 and II. 18 are almost repeated in *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 49, 50 and 52. जलयन्त्रमन्दिर is referred to in *Ṛtusaṁhāra* as well as in *Raghuvaṁśa*. Regarding comparative literary merit the description of hot season of *Raghuvaṁśa* is undoubtedly the product of the mature poetical genius of the poet (परिणत-प्रज्ञस्य वाणी).

Vv. 13-27 are devoted to the description of the torrid and unbearable heat of the northern planes of India including the Malwa tract. The dominant sentiment rises here, almost to the level of रौद्र or भयानक. The description of the hot season in *Raghuvaṁśa* is much too mild in comparison.

CANTO II: *VARṢĀVARṆANA*

Kālidāsa has missed describing the rainy season in both of his great epics. In *Meghadūta*, however, the scene is laid in the beginning of Varṣākāla for making amends for ignoring that season in his other works.

In this connection it is difficult to refrain from referring to the resounding, detailed and highly colourful description of the rainy season in Act V of *Mṛcchakaṭika*.

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2. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 43-53.

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CANTO III: *ŚARADVARṆANA*

As regards poetical craftsmanship, perhaps, this is the best canto in *Ṛtusaṁhāra*. Śaradvarṇana also appears in *Raghuvaṁśa*, IV.17-24. In comparing the two descriptions we have to remark, as before, that as regards finished style and delicate fancy the description in *Raghuvaṁśa*, though short, is on a much higher level than that in *Ṛtusaṁhāra*, although marked similarities of ideas in both descriptions are clearly noticeable. Reference to the resplendent autumnal moonlight is made in *Ṛtusaṁhāra* as well as in *Raghuvaṁśa*.[3] Kāśa flower regarded as the hall-mark of this season is mentioned both in *Ṛtusaṁhāra* and *Raghuvaṁśa*.[4] Kumuda, Haṁsas, सप्तच्छद (सप्तपर्ण) are also mentioned in both.[5] Both descriptions make mention of the facts, that in autumn the waters regain their translucence, that the

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3. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 7; *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 18.

4. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 1 :
काशांशुका विकचपद्ममनोज्ञवक्त्रा ।
Ṛtusaṁhāra III. 2 :
काशैर्मही शिशिरदीधितिना रजन्यो ।
Raghuvaṁśa IV. 17 :
पुण्डरीकातपत्रस्तं विकसत्काशचामरः ।

5. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 2 :
हंसैर्जलानि सरितां कुमुदैः सरांसि ।
Ṛtusaṁhāra III. 15 :
कह्लारपद्मकुमुदानि मुहुर्विधुन्वन् ।
Raghuvaṁśa IV. 19 :
हंसश्रेणीषु तारासु कुमुद्वत्सु च वारिषु ।
Ṛtusaṁhāra III. 2 :
सप्तच्छदैः कुसुमभारनतैर्वनान्ताः ।
Raghuvaṁśa IV. 23 :
प्रसवैः सप्तपर्णानां मदगन्धिभिराहृताः ।

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roads are free from mud and therefore become passable and that the rivers are fordable.[6]

CANTO IV : *HEMANTAVARṆANA*

This chapter is devoted to Hemanta (मार्गशीर्ष, पौष) corresponding to December and January. This is really the cold season in most parts of India. The poet speaks of ripe corn ready to be harvested and the falling snows, as the salient features of this season.[7] Hard and unpleasantly cold ornaments like अङ्गद (bracelet), काञ्ची (girdle), नूपुर (anklet) are not used in these days.[8] An incision made by the teeth of the lover on the lower lip of a young woman is doubly painful and does not allow even a free and hearty laugh.[9] In this season the poet says that lovers are endowed with more enduring power in amorous dalliance.[10]

CANTO V : *ŚIŚIRAVARṆANA*

This chapter is devoted to the remaining part of the cold season (माघ, फाल्गुन) which corresponds with February and March. This season is also प्रकामकाम[11], i.e., capable of giving full scope to the amorous impulse in contrast to Grīṣma

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6. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 22 :
   विगतकलुषमम्भः श्यानपङ्का धरित्री ।
   Raghuvaṁśa IV. 24 :
   सरितः कुर्वती गाधाः पथश्चाश्यानकर्दमान् ।
7. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* IV. 1 :
   परिपक्वशालिः प्रपतत्तुषारो ।
8. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* IV. 3 :
   न बाहुयुग्मेषु विलासिनीनां प्रयान्ति सङ्गं वलयाङ्गदानि ।
   Ṛtusaṁhāra IV. 4.
9. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* IV. 6 :
   हसन्ति नोच्चैर्दशनाग्रभिन्नान्प्रपीड्यमानानधरानवेक्ष्य ।
   Raghuvaṁśa XIX. 35 :
   वेणुना दशनपीडिताधरा शिल्पकार्य उभयेन वेजिताः ।
10. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* IV. 12-14.
11. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* V. 1 :
    प्रकामकामं प्रमदाजनप्रियम् ।
    Ṛtusaṁhāra V. 7.

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which is प्रशान्तमन्मथ, i.e., lukewarm in sex passion. The Śāli corn which is freshly harvested in this season together with raw sugar (this being the time of the sugarcane crop) are made into various tempting edibles for the delectation of the people.[12]

CANTO VI: *VASANTAVARṆANA*

This canto deals with the spring (Vasanta) season, the time covering April and May (चैत्र, वैशाख), generally considered the gay season of the year—the favourite time of the pleasure-loving persons of both the sexes. It is characterized by pleasant evenings (सुखाः प्रदोषाः or दिवसाः परिणामरमणीयाः)[13]. Reddish coloured garments are preferred by women in these days as the index, perhaps, of the rising tide of erotic feelings.[14] कर्णिकार[15], अशोक[16], नवमल्लिका[17], चूतद्रुम[18], कुरबक[19], किंशुक (पलाश)[20], कुन्दलता[21] are some of the trees and creepers which embellish this season.

In Canto IX of *Raghuvaṁśa* the poet describes the spring season.[22] Especially here the musical and alliterative swing in the last quarter of the verses and the delicate fancy of description show a high level of poetical excellence. In addition to the trees and plants enumerated

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12. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* V. 16.
    प्रचुरगुडविकारः स्वादुशालीक्षुरम्यः ।
13. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 2; *Śākuntala* I. 3.
14. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 4:
    रक्तांशुकैः कुङ्कुमरागगौरैरलंक्रियन्ते स्तनमण्डलानि ।
15. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 15, 20.
16. „ VI. 16.
17. „ VI. 5.
18. „ VI. 15.
19. „ VI. 18.
20. „ VI. 19, 20.
21. „ VI. 23.
22. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 24-47.

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above, Bakula and Tilaka are also mentioned in *Raghuvaṁśa*.[23]

It must be mentioned here that both in *Ṛtusaṁhāra* and *Raghuvaṁśa* frequent reference is made to indulgence in spirituous liquors as an accompaniment and spur to sexual activity.

The description of the "seasons" has been attempted by an English poet—James Thomson—so far back as 1726. Thomson was in a way a precursor of the "Nature" school of which William Wordsworth was admittedly the leading bard. Thomson's "Seasons" never attained a leading place in English literature.

The absence of coherence and a well-defined scheme, digressive desertations on extraneous subjects are some of the defects of this work.

Thomson recognizes only four seasons, viz., the Spring, the Summer, the Autumn and the Winter. The first two correspond with Vasanta and Grīṣma of Kālidāsa and the last two with Śarad, Hemanta and Śiśira. The monsoon is not a separate season in England as in India because it continues in the former place with more or less variation throughout the entire year. It has, therefore, no place in the "Seasons".

Thomson, like Kālidāsa, describes the effects and influences of the advent and efflux of the various seasons on inanimate matter, on vegetables, brute animals and lastly on man. Further comparison between the two poetical pieces can hardly be interesting or useful as weather conditions and general environments in both the countries concerned are materially different.

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23. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 30:
मधुकरैरकरोन्मधुलोलुपैर्बकुलमाकुलमायतपङ्क्तिभिः ।
Raghuvaṁśa IX. 44 :
सदृशकान्तिरलक्ष्यत मञ्जरी तिलकजालकजालकमौक्तिकैः ।

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Chapter IX

SṚṄGĀRATILAKA

This collection of miscellaneous verses is popularly ascribed to Kālidāsa although it is very doubtful whether a large portion, or perhaps any one, of the verse belongs to him. The dominant sentiment which permeates this collection is Śṛṅgāra and therefore the collection is styled *Śṛṅgāratilaka*. Some of the verses exhibit remarkable flashes of fancy and excellence of phrase.

Verse 3 presents some well-known poetical stunts and conventions frequently met with in Sanskrit literature.[1] Says the ardent lover to his wayward and irresponsive girl, "The creator availed himself of every soft and fragrant material in moulding thy incomparably beautiful body. Whether the available stock of Indīvaras, Ambujas, Kundas, Navapallavas, Campakadalas was unfortunately spent up or through sheer perversity the old Brahmā fashioned thy heart out of a hard stone! It is for this reason, Oh beautiful one, thou art irresponsive and hard-hearted."

The anxious lover importunes his lady-love to enter the house at once, as the time of the total eclipse of the moon is fast approaching. He is seriously afraid that Rāhu will preferably swallow up her spotless face instead of the tainted moon, mistaking the former for the latter![2] व्यतिरेक is the figure of speech intended here, as मुख (face), the उपमेय, is described as अकलङ्क (spotless) while the moon, the उपमान, is indicated as सकलङ्क (disfigured with a dark spot)

1. *Śṛṅgāratilaka* 3 :
इन्दीवरेण नयनं मुखमम्बुजेन कुन्देन दन्तमधरं नवपल्लवेन ।
अङ्गानि चम्पकदलैः स विधाय वेधाः कान्ते कथं घटितवानुपलेन चेतः ॥
2. *Śṛṅgāratilaka* 6 :
झटिति प्रविश गेहे मा बहिस्तिष्ठ कान्ते ग्रहणसमयवेला वर्तते शीतरश्मेः ।
तव मुखमकलङ्कं वीक्ष्य नूनं स राहुर्ग्रसति तव मुखेन्दुं पूर्णचन्द्रं विहाय ॥

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and Rāhu may therefore be tempted to choose the better of the two.

Verse 13 of the collection has a peculiar charm and insinuation. A young traveller is resting at night in the house of an elderly person who has married a young and passionate girl. In the middle of the night she tries to wake up the youthful guest with the following words: "The night being young and pitch dark, the sky overcast with gathering sombre clouds, my husband dead asleep having become completely exhausted with his manifold worries, our village infested with robbers, I a helpless young girl am all atremble for fear of wicked men. Oh! good traveller, give up your sleep; and help me!"[3] A good instance of the ready wit and resourcefulness of women.[4]

In verse 14 the poet makes a jocular hit against the intrepid seekers after the mysterious परब्रह्म which is admittedly निर्गुण (without any good qualities, or above the three qualities of सत्त्व, रजस् and तमस्) and also impervious to sensations of pleasure and pain.[5] He expresses his conviction that मोक्ष is within easy reach of everybody and consists in loosening the naval knot of the garment of a young blooming girl inebriated and bursting with uncontrollable passion! Here it will be seen that the pun is on the word मोक्ष (release). He styles the seeker of ब्रह्म as जडमति which may mean "a stupid person" or वेदाभ्यासजड (one whose carnal desires are killed by long and intimate study of the Vedas).

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3. *Śṛṅgāratilaka* 13:
यामिन्येषा बहलजलदैर्बद्धभीमान्धकारा निद्रां यातो मम पतिरसौ क्लेशितः कर्मदुःखैः।
बाला चाहं खलु खलभयात्प्राप्तगाढप्रकम्पा ग्रामश्चौरैरयमुपहतः पान्थ निद्रां जहीहि॥

4. *Śākuntala* Act V, p. 172:
इदं तत्प्रत्युत्पन्नमति स्त्रैणमिति यदुच्यते।

5. *Śṛṅgāratilaka* 24:
अविदितसुखदुःखं निर्गुणं वस्तु किञ्चिज्जडमतिरिह कश्चिन्मोक्ष इत्याचचक्षे।
मम तु मतमनङ्गस्मेरतारुण्यघूर्णन्मदकलमदिराक्षीनीविमोक्षो हि मोक्षः॥

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CHAPTER X

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Hindu society is normally static and conservative and all progress or change has always been reluctant and slow, being the result of sheer necessity. It is not too much to say that in its essential features it remains at present almost the same as it existed some two thousand years back. Perhaps the wonderful resilience and tenacity of the Hindu race may be due, in some measure, to its innermost conservatism. In this chapter it is attempted to portray the social conditions of ancient Hindu society as is evidenced in the writings of Kālidāsa.

VARṆAS AND ĀŚRAMAS

The peculiar and pivotal feature of the Hindu social fabric are the hoary institutions of Varṇas and Āśramas being the division and demarcation of the people in four rigid compartments (वर्णs)—namely, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra, i.e., (1) the aristocracy of learning, (2) that of power, (3) that of wealth, and (4) the proletariat or commoners—as well as the four stages (आश्रमs) of life enjoined by the Śāstras for the first three classes mentioned before. There are indications in Kālidāsa's writings that the above-mentioned four Varṇas were not at his time so watertight as they later on grew to be. The higher classes were permitted to marry women from the lower orders without incurring opprobrium or degradation. In *Śākuntala*, Duṣyanta at one time consoles himself with the idea that Śakuntalā might have been the child of Kaṇva by a woman of an inferior order.[1] So also in *Mālavikāgnimitra*[2] a

1. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 32 : असवर्णक्षेत्रसंभवा स्यात् ।
2. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act I, p. 9.

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brother of the queen by a woman of an inferior caste, sends her as a present Mālavikā, a supposed girl-artist conquered in war. It is well-known that अनुलोम marriages were freely permitted between different castes. It appears that Irāvatī the younger queen of Agnimitra, who by caste was a Kṣatriya, was very probably a woman of inferior parentage judging from her manners and general culture. Paraśurāma regarded almost as a divine incarnation was the offspring of a Kśatriya woman by a Brahmin father. After his discomfiture at the hands of Rāma at the end of Canto XI of *Raghuvaṁśa,* he is said to have given up his mother's martial heritage and decided to pursue the life of penance and contemplation peculiar to his father's class.[3]

The word अवर्ण is used to denote something so abominable and degenerate as to fall outside the scope of the four recognized Varṇas.[4]

The greatest compliment that could be given to a king was that he maintained the strictest discipline and rigid distinctions between the four recognized castes.[5] The limitations imposed by the Śāstras on a particular class or caste could not be transgressed with impunity. The decapitation of Śambūka by Rāma for no other offence than that of practising तपस्या (penance) which was considered the special prerogative of the Brahmins, is an instance in point. Śambūka by his temperament and qualities was certainly a Brahmin and his treatment and punishment by Rāma as a law-breaking Śūdra was an act of unreasoning conservatism unworthy, at any rate, of the great epic hero. Kālidāsa follows the general trend of beliefs prevailing in those days and the penance of Śambūka was considered by him as an अपचार[6] and वर्णविक्रिया[7] i.e. violation of the rules of caste.

So also it was considered obligatory on every person to

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3. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 90.
4. „ XIV. 38.
5. „ I. 17; *Śākuntala* V. 10; *Vikramorvaśīya* V. 22.
6. „ XV. 47.
7. „ XV. 48.

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abide by and perform his सहजकर्म i.e. duties to which he was born.[8]

It was therefore not permissible as a rule to deviate from the old rut in which the various castes moved on and lived from time immemorial. It may be interesting to refer in this connection to the advice given by Viṭa to Vasantasenā, a concubine, in *Mṛcchakaṭika* which embodies the same principle: "Regard yourself as a creeper growing on the roadside whose flowers may be plucked by any passer-by."[9]

The four Varṇas of Vedic times, which professedly came into existence as an essential part of social economy as being based on the principle of utility, convenience and division of labour according to individual aptitudes, however gradually degenerated and crystallized into cast-iron divisions between man and man, and birth only and not merits became the sole criterion of a person's status and position in life.

As a rule प्रतिलोम marriages i.e. the unions of females of higher caste to men of inferior castes were forbidden. Had Śakuntalā been the real daughter of Kaṇva who was a Brahmin, Duṣyanta would not have dared to cast a covetous eye on her and hence his great relief and joy on discovering that she was the illegitimate offspring of a Kṣatriya, born of a celestial prostitute.[10] The union of Yayāti an ancestor of Duṣyanta with Devayānī the daughter of Śukrācārya was an exception. Devayānī's relations with Kaca the son of Bṛhaspati having been well-known she was perhaps unable to secure a Brahmin husband.

BRAHMANICAL HIERARCHY

Kālidāsa writes about a period of Indian history when

8. *Śākuntala* VI. 1.
9. *Mṛcchakaṭika* I. 31:
तरुणजनसहायश्चिन्त्यतां वेशवासो विगणय गणिका त्वं मार्गजाता लतेव ।
वहसि हि धनहार्यं पण्यभूतं शरीरं सममुपचर भद्रे सुप्रियं चाप्रियं च ॥
10. *Śākuntala* I. 24:
भव हृदय साभिलाषं संप्रति संदेहनिर्णयो जातः ।

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Brahmanical hierarchy had firmly established itself as the dominant cultural and spiritual force in Hindu society. Since the composition of the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Gṛhya-sūtras*, the Brahmins came to enjoy the sole monopoly of ritualistic knowledge, especially connected with the Yajñas or sacrifices which were assiduously represented to the mass mind as the main motive power which regulated and sustained the entire worldly existence.[11] By monopolizing the knowledge relating to the complex and difficult ritual of the Yajñas as well as of the domestic ceremonies and also by their mystic life of renunciation, asceticism and life-long study, the Brahmins established themselves as a spiritual and intellectual hierarchy the like of which the world perhaps has never witnessed.

Signs, however, were not wanting that the Brahmins by their exclusiveness and class arrogance were sowing the seeds of their unpopularity among the masses. Kālidāsa tries to reconcile and unite the spiritual prowess of the Brahmins with the martial qualities of the Kṣatriya class for the well-being of the people.[12] The conflict however which existed between the two classes and is depicted in Canto XI of *Raghuvaṁśa* between Paraśurāma the Brahmin warrior and Rāma the scion of the Kṣatriya race is an instance in point. The breaking of Śiva's bow by Rāma which was the condition prescribed for the winning of Sītā's hand in marriage appears to have incensed the irascible and jealous Brahmin.[13] His discomfiture however at the hands of the young Kṣatriya warrior was complete and his sorry retreat from a humiliating position is none too

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11. *Bhagavadgītā* III. 10 :
सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥
Bhagavadgītā III. 14 :
यज्ञाद्भवन्ति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ।

12. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 4 :
पवनाग्निसमागमो ह्ययं सहितं ब्रह्म यदस्त्रतेजसा ।

13. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 71.

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complimentary for the class to which he belonged. On the other hand, the conduct of Rāma is spirited, dignified and courteous and throughout the episode the Brahmin suffers by contrast with the young Kṣatriya youth of great promise.

In Canto XV of *Raghuvaṁśa,* the insolent and almost abusive language used by an old Brahmin against king Rāma whom he held responsible for his son's premature death is another instance of needless discourtesy and rudeness of the Brahminic mentality.[14] Apart from the theory that the king was responsible for all mishaps in his kingdom, the Brahmin could well have laid his case before his king with the courtesy and deference due to a great and good king.

In *Śākuntala* also the tendency is clearly visible. In Act I an anchorite belonging to the hermitage of Kaṇva in effect chides king Duṣyanta for pursuing a deer which undoubtedly was a legitimate object for hunting. It is evident that the king was unaware that he was moving within the holy precincts of a hermitage and that the animal he was after was therefore sacrosanct for hunting purposes. If the ascetic had requested the king to leave that particular animal alone, he would have been within his rights but he goes further and apparently remonstrates with him for hunting an innocent animal such as a deer.[15] It is well-known that मृगया (hunting) was permissible for the Kṣatriyas as it was an excellent exercise and afforded archery practice to them as a martial race.[16] It is therefore sheer impertinence on the part of the forester to censure the king where no blame was attachable to him. If the advice given in the second line of verse 10 of Act I[17] was fully accepted, hunting would have become an almost forbidden sport. Similarly the conduct of Durvāsas referred to in Act IV of *Śākuntala* is another instance of priestly arrogance

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14. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 43.
15. *Śākuntala* I. 10.
16. " II. 5; *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 49.
17. " I. 10 : आर्तत्राणाय वः शस्त्रं न प्रहर्तुमनागसि ।

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and relentless vindictiveness. A young girl in dire mental distress at what she rightly considered as the faithless conduct of her lover and placed in a difficult and delicate situation, was unconsciously inattentive to the call of the highly irascible and unforgiving Brahmin. What was the punishment meted out to her ? A curse which would have condemned her to a life-lasting separation from her husband.[18] It is true that the curse of Durvāsas is a pure invention of the poet and constitutes an important feature quite extraneous to the original simple story of the *Mahābhārata*, enabling Kālidāsa to portray Duṣyanta as a धीरोदात्त नायक. But Durvāsas was so notorious for such cruel vagaries that the invention has all the appearance of truth.

The character of Śārṅgarava in *Śākuntala* is also disfigured by his supreme conceit and a species of aggressive superiority complex.[19] His rancorous attack on Duṣyanta may perhaps be justified by what was supposed to be the latter's faithlessness and cruel conduct towards a simple-minded and guileless girl, but the sentiments to which he has given expression on entering the king's palace undoubtedly savours of a superior pose and arrogance of caste.

It appears that even among the lowest stratum of society a kind of critical and querulous attitude of mind regarding the high-browed and insincere conduct of the priestly class was slowly beginning to take root. The retort of the fisherman to the taunt levelled against his means of livelihood by the police officer that "even a learned Brahmin although considered very soft-hearted is capable of killing the sacrificial beast in a horrid manner"[20] is not only a well-merited hit, but a very revealing commentary on the hypocritical code of morals prevailing in the upper classes.

It is this growing exclusiveness, arrogance, aggressive superiority complex and duplicity of conduct on the part of some members of the priestly class which later on paved

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18. *Śākuntala* IV. 1.
19. „ V. 11.
20. „ VI. 1.

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the way to a systematic and powerful revolt against Brahminical domination.

But there is no doubt that at this period the Brahminical life was as a rule moulded on a lofty ideal of service, self-effacement and unswerving devotion to the pursuit of knowledge. Vasiṣṭha[21], Viśvāmitra[22], Agastya[23], Vālmīki[24], Kaṇva[25], Mārīca[26] and Cyavana[27] are some of the highlights of spiritual eminence to whom the poet makes respectful reference and pays due homage in the course of his writings.

KṢATRIYAS

The Kṣatriyas were the hereditary ruling class in whose hands all mundane power and wealth were centered. The king was the head of this governing clan. It was believed that the king by his heredity and noble birth was fully qualified to rule his kingdom even though he was a mere child.[28] This was something like the doctrine of the "Divine Right of Kings" which prevailed some time ago in Europe also. It is surprising, however, that this powerful class, as is amply evidenced in Kālidāsa's writings, showed in his time the utmost deference and respect to the Bhūdevas (the gods on earth) i.e. Brahmins. The prompt obedience of Duṣyanta to the somewhat brusque behest of an unknown anchorite to cease molesting the hermitage deer, his entering the तपोवन in a modest and unostentatious dress[29], his

21. *Raghuvaṁśa* I.
22. " XI.
23. " XIII.
24. " XV.
25. *Śākuntala* IV.
26. " VII.
27. *Vikramorvaśīya* V.
28. " V. 18 :
न खलु वयसा जात्यैवायं स्वकार्यसहो भरः ।
Raghuvaṁśa XVIII. 45 :
ना विष्णुः पृथिवीपतिः ।
29. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 24 :
विनीतवेषेण प्रवेष्टव्यानि तपोवनानि नाम ।

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anxiety that there should be no annoyance or inconvenience to the ascetics due to the proximity of his army[30], his strenuous attempt to resist the temptation of Śakuntalā's charms under the impression that she might have been a Brahmin girl[31], his apprehensions on being informed of the arrival of Kaṇva's disciples in his capital that all may not be well in the hermitage owing to some carelessness or default in his duties as a king[32], his warning to his general that the sages, though they may appear mild and of a kindly nature, contain a dangerous destructive fire within themselves and that therefore utmost care ought to be taken to avoid giving them offence[33]—all this clearly testifies to the great veneration and fear in which learned Brahmins were held even by mighty kings. In Act VII of *Śākuntala* Duṣyanta breathes a sigh of relief[34] at his escape from the wrath of Kaṇva due to the latter's knowledge, by his spiritual vision, of the circumstances which made him cast away his (Kaṇva's) beloved daughter.

In *Raghuvaṁśa* also, the extreme veneration of Dilīpa and his successors for the great spiritual prowess of their preceptor and their belief that their success and prosperity was mainly dependent on his mystic spiritual power, show to what extent the Brahmins had tightened their hold on the Kṣatriya class.[35] In Canto V of *Raghuvaṁśa*, the king Raghu, in order to satisfy the need of Kautsa by providing him the means of paying his preceptor's exorbitant fees, even proposes to invade Kubera, the God of Wealth, as he (Raghu) himself at that time happened to be utterly desti-

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30. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 53 :
वयमप्याश्रमपीडा यथा न भवति तथा प्रयतिष्यामहे ।
31. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 32 :
अपि नाम कुलपतेरियमसवर्णक्षेत्रसंभवा स्यात् ।
32. *Śākuntala* V. 9.
33. „ II. 7.
34. „ Act VII, p. 262 :
अतः खलु मम नातिक्रुद्धो मुनिः ।
35. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 60-64.

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tute of any wealth.[36] It was also for the purpose of bringing to life the prematurely deceased son of a Brahmin that Raghu's grandson Rāma essayed to conquer the God of Death.[37] It was to a Brahmin, Vālmīki, that Rāma made a present[38] of his entire kingdom on his discovering that it was that venerable sage who had given genial hospitality and protection to Sītā during her exile and brought up and educated the young princes Kuśa and Lava. When at the request of the presiding deity of Ayodhyā, Kuśa decided to leave Kuśāvatī, he handed over that prosperous city to the Brahmins.[39]

The Brahmins as a rule were reputed to be patient and forgiving[40] and it was on very rare occasions that they lost their temper and deviated from their inoffensive ways. Brahmins were also known to confer great boons if pleased as also to inflict dire curses if incensed.[41]

The Kṣatriyas as stated above were repositories of power and wealth. From time immemorial, care was taken to impress upon the mind of the Kṣatriya youth the onerousness of his manifold duties and responsibilities. The etymological meaning of the word "Kṣatriya" was "one who saves others from calamities"[42]. The elders and ministers were fully aware of the dangers and temptations which surround and beset a king. Moreover, as a rule, the restless times and the constant clash and conflict between numerous rivals for power, did not leave much leisure and inclination to a dutiful king, in those days, to give free rein to his pleasure-loving impulses. But more than anything else it was the great ideal of kingship preached and inculcated from time to time by poets and law-givers and wise elderly persons and the fine traditions of selfless service and high

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36. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 26.
37. " XV. 45.
38. " XV. 70.
39. " XVI. 25.
40. " V. 54.
41. *Kumārasambhava* IV. 43.
42. *Raghuvaṁśa* II. 53: क्षतात्किल त्रायते...

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sense of kingly duty and responsibility exemplified in the conduct of many excellent kings which kept the princely order under due control. This great ideal is set out in detail in Cantos I and XVII of *Raghuvaṁśa* in relation to Dilīpa and Atithi who were considered ideal kings. As a result there were many exceptionally great and good kings such as Dilīpa, Raghu, Aja, Rāma, Atithi and Bharata who held aloft the torch of kingly virtue and preeminence. But it could hardly be expected that such high level could be maintained for all time without a break. The salutary maxim that "blossoming adolescence, a beautiful strong body, limitless wealth and power is a very dangerous combination which carries within itself the seeds of rapid degeneration"[43], is true in all times and all climes.

It cannot be denied that the widely prevailing custom of polygamy must have materially helped towards this downfall of royalty. The plurality of wives, whatever may have been the excuse for it in those times, was doubtless productive of laxity of morals especially in the male. The harems of kings and rich people were veritable plague-spots of intrigue, animosities and rivalries.[44] Constant machinations and struggle among the denizens of the seraglio to prevent fresh and unwelcome additions being made to their numbers is a conspicuous feature of the dramatic plots of Kālidāsa. Some of the heroes of his plays appear to be more concerned with their love-intrigues than with their policies of state or the well-being of their subjects. The taunt administered by queen Dhāriṇī to the king (Agnimitra) was therefore fully deserved.[45]

In *Raghuvaṁśa* itself, the degeneration of the kingly line becomes gradually but increasingly manifest. Rāma was a strict monogamist. Dilīpa, Raghu, Aja, Daśaratha do not appear to have a large number of wives. But Rāma's son Kuśa appears to have lapsed into the usual habit of kings and his harem consisted of "hundreds of wives"[46].

43. *Kādambarīsāra*, pp. 37-38.
44. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 218.
45. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act I, p. 22.
46. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 58.

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There appears a decided decline in the might of Raghu's descendants and Kuśa was killed in the fight with the demon Durjaya.[47] Another king of that race, Dhruvasiddhi, was killed by a lion while hunting.[48] This degeneration reaches its climax in Agnivarṇa in Canto XIX. He was out-and-out a slacker and a rotter.

Too much addiction to wine and spirituous liquors may have also accelerated the moral and physical decline of the Kṣatriya class. The Brahmins were generally free from this vice but the martial race was more or less addicted to it. Wines and spirits were generally used as aphrodisiacs and a necessary appendage of and spur to sexual enjoyment.[49] It may be noted, however, that during religious or auspicious ceremonies such as marriage, performance of sacrifices or coronation of kings, the use of alcoholic drinks, even of the Soma juice, is not referred to in Kālidāsa's writings. Plurality of wives and mistresses together with addiction to alcoholic drinks gradually undermined the great stamina of the fighting classes. It must be admitted however that even in the case of a profligate libertine like Agnivarṇa there is observable an undeviating regard for the sanctity of married life. Throughout the writings of Kālidāsa there is no slackening of the respect for the marital tie. On the contrary every opportunity was availed of to emphasize the inviolable sanctity of a married woman.[50]

The exceptionally high ideal of conjugal fidelity firmly implanted in the heart of the womanhood of ancient India

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47. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 5.

48. " XVIII. 35.

49. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* II. 18; IV. 11; V. 5, 10; VI. 10.
Raghuvaṁśa XIX. 11, 12, 46.
Kumārasambhava IV. 12; VIII. 77.
Meghadūta I. 49; II. 3, 11, 15, 32.

50. *Śākuntala* Act V, p. 164 : अनिर्वर्णनीयं परकलत्रम् ।
" V. 28.
" Act VI, p. 202 : कः पतिदेवतामन्यः परामर्ष्टुमुत्सहेत ।
Raghuvaṁśa XVI. 8.

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saved this great country from meeting the fate of Greece and Rome where gross moral laxity in both the sexes helped to pave the way for the rapid decline and fall of those great nations.

It is only the annals of *Rājataraṅgiṇī* which reveal a depth of moral corruption scarcely noticeable anywhere else in Sanskrit literature. Although Kālidāsa and other Sanskrit writers may show a strong hedonistic tendency, the record of moral depravity and perversity of some Kṣatriya rulers such as Paṅgu (पार्थ), Unmattavatī and Kṣemagupta, has hardly any parallel except perhaps in the history of later-day Egypt, Greece and Rome.

VAIŚYAS

Of the Four Varṇas the Vaiśyas hardly find any reference in Kālidāsa's works except in one or two places.[51] The usual occupations of the Vaiśya class were (1) agriculture (कृषि), (2) trade (वाणिज्य), and (3) the breeding and preservation of cattle.[52] They used to risk the high seas in the pursuit of wealth and like all rich men they had a plurality of wives, as many perhaps as the purse could buy and the house could contain. They also used to traverse great distances in large companies and caravans for fear of robbers and freebooters who infested forests and even maintained fastnesses of their own in out-of-the-way places. These robbers and freebooters worked in large gangs, were well-armed and were brave and desperate fighters. Some Vaiśyas had great wealth, but they as a rule were devoid of the spiritual and intellectual eminence of the Brahmins as well as the power, authority and bravery of the Kṣatriyas and were therefore mostly back-benchers and lacked the dominating position of the two upper castes. The ancient

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51. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 219
Mālavikāgnimitra Act V, p. 98: गताध्वा वणिग्गणः
Vikramorvaśīya IV. 13 : नैगमाः सानुमन्तः।

52. कृषिगोरक्षवाणिज्यम्।

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Indians were at no time a nation of shop-keepers and mere wealth although duly appreciated did not by itself weigh much with the people like great learning and high fighting qualities.

ŚŪDRAS

Śūdras were not thought of sufficient importance to deserve any notice in Kālidāsa's writings. In *Śākuntala* a fisherman who has been instrumental in finding the king's signet ring, figures conspicuously in Act VI, where the readers are given a fleeting glimpse, as it were, of the life and habits of the lower classes. It seems they were generally simple-hearted and honest folk peacefully carrying on their hereditary occupations. The city police appear to be mostly recruited from the lower grades of the Kṣatriya class. It is surprising that the police mentality and methods were at that time no better or worse than they are at present.[53] The needless rudeness and callous hard-heartedness to the unfortunates who fall in their hands as culprits, over-enthusiasm to convict the accused by fair or foul means, sneaking obsequiousness to the rich or powerful, addiction to alcohol, tendency to bribery and corruption were, even two thousand years ago, the same distinguishing hall-marks of this gentry.

In *Raghuvaṁśa* we find the episode of Śambūka's unauthorised penance and his decapitation by Rāma on that account.[54] On the whole the fate of the Śūdras does not appear to be enviable and they were set apart for lowly service and general subservience to the three upper castes.

The doctrine of Karman which firmly impressed in the mind of the masses that the position, status and condition of a person in his present incarnation on earth was determined by his or her good or bad actions in prior births,[55] and that the faithful and whole-hearted discharge of the

53. *Śākuntala* Act VI, pp. 183-188.
54. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 49-52.
55. " XIV. 62; *Śākuntala* Act VII, p. 253.

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duties attached to one's particular position in life and trust in and devotion to God were certain to ensure a better fate for him in the next birth, was indeed a powerful antidote and soporific against discontent, jealousy and hatred against those who were better placed in the world. The disruptive and explosive political cults of the present times which tend to stir up bitter class hatred were almost entirely unknown in those days because it was the firm conviction that by the operation of an unerring law everybody got what he deserved.

There were signs, however, that even among the Śūdras a censorious and critical attitude regarding the conduct and pretensions of the upper castes was gradually growing in strength.[56]

MARRIAGE AND SEX RELATIONS

The institution of marriage is the foundation on which the entire frame of society in India as well as elsewhere rests. In ancient Indian society there were various forms of marriage corresponding with the different stages of its social evolution and progress. The following were the forms of marriage in vogue at the time : (1) Paiśāca, (2) Āsura or Rākṣasa, (3) Gāndharva, (4) Svayaṁvara, (5) Ārṣa, (6) Prājāpatya, (7) Brāhma, (8) Daiva. In the initial barbarous state of society the (1) Āsura or Rākṣasa and (2) Paiśāca forms must have been in vogue. The girl was forcibly abducted from the bosom of her parental stock after overcoming the resistance of her kinsmen (Rākṣasa or Āsura form) or she was ravished by fraud after being doped in most cases (Paiśāca form). The Ārṣa form evolved out of the sale of girls for a consideration such as of a number of kine. The Gāndharva belonged to a much later stage of evolution when women came to be partially emancipated and were allowed to choose their own mates under the influence of sex attraction and passion. It will be noted that the marriage of Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā was a free and voluntary union unaccompanied by any ritual or ceremony

56. *Śākuntala* VI. 1.

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or interference or co-operation of her guardian or elders of the family.[57] This form of marriage was recognized among the Kṣatriyas and among the lower classes.[58] The Svayaṁvara was a respectable mode of choosing the husband by a fully grown-up and intelligent girl. A beautiful and unforgettable description of this ceremony is given in Canto V of *Raghuvaṁśa* where the bride moves on among rows of princes of the royal blood and is assisted in making her choice by her female confidential friend who happens to know to the tips of her fingers each one of the illustrious aspirants for her hand, his genealogy, virtues, personal charms, exploits, and the particular part of India which he governed. This form of marriage was in vogue in the case of beautiful princesses whose hand was sought by many kings. Svayaṁvara form was of two kinds: (1) Indumatī-Svayaṁvara described in Canto VI of *Raghuvaṁśa* was the genuine form which gave the bride full power to choose her mate. (2) Sītā-Svayaṁvara did not confer on the bride liberty to choose her husband but she had to wed the man who performed the feat which was advertised and prescribed as the test and condition for winning the bride. It was considered ungracious and highly improper on the part of any princely suitor or a conspiracy and combination of many disappointed suitors as in Canto VI of *Raghuvaṁśa*, to dispute or forcibly try to set aside the voluntary choice of the bride although such episodes do not appear to be unusual. At the time of the Svayaṁvara of Rukmiṇī with Kṛṣṇa, her brother Rukmin with the help of Śiśupāla and his friends tried to wrest the bride from the hands of Kṛṣṇa. Damayantī, Sītā, Draupadī and many other famous princesses were married according to the Svayaṁvara form. In Svayaṁvara form, after the groom was selected, the marriage was generally celebrated according to the Brāhma or the Prājāpatya ceremony. The marriages of Aja and of Śiva were performed according to the Brāhma or the Prājāpatya form. The Prājāpatya and the Brāhma forms were considered

57. *Śākuntala* V. 16.
58. „ III. 22.

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the best and most civilized where the bride was given away as a free and voluntary gift and in the former case, i.e., Prājāpatya form, adorned with ornaments, without any expectation of a return or consideration, entirely out of religious, spiritual and benevolent motives. Sex passion and greed had no part in the Brāhma and the Prājāpatya marriage. Besides these there was the Daiva form, very rarely used, where the bride was given away at the time of the celebration of a sacrifice to the sacrificial priest. Thus Śāntā, sister of Rāma, was married to Ṛṣyaśṛṅga.

In the works of Kālidāsa the Brāhma, the Prājāpatya[59], the Gāndharva[60] and the Svayaṁvara[61] forms of marriage are referred to and described.

In the Svayaṁvara form of marriage the bride signified and announced her selection of her groom by putting a garland of flowers round his neck which garland she carried along with her. Both the Gāndharva and the Svayaṁvara forms were well-recognized among the Kṣatriyas.[62]

MARRIAGE RITUAL

The marriage of Aja and Indumatī was celebrated by the following ritual. अर्घ्य and मधुपर्क i.e., the offering of flowers, curds, honey and jewels to the bridegroom by way of welcome[63], igniting the sacred fire by the family priest as it was essential that the union between the bride and the groom should be consecrated in the presence of the holy fire[64], पाणिग्रहण i.e. acceptance of the bride's hand by the groom[65], प्रदक्षिणा i.e. circumambulation of the fire by the couple[66], लाजविसर्ग i.e. the throwing of parched rice on the fire[67], the applying of wetted rice to the forehead

59. *Raghuvaṁsa* VII; *Kumārasambhava* VII.
60. *Śākuntala* III.
61. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI.
62. *Śākuntala* III. 22.
63. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 18.
64. ,, VII. 20.
65. ,, VII. 21.
66. ,, VII. 24.
67. ,, VII. 25.

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of each of the couple by the relations and matrons of the family[68]. The ritual described in *Kumārasambhava* is almost similar. It is as follows: the auspicious bath—मङ्गलस्नान[69], tying of the auspicious wrist-thread—कौतुकहस्तसूत्रबन्धन[70], salutation by the bride to the family deities and pious matrons[71], welcoming the bridegroom by offering of honey and curds along with jewels—सरत्नमर्घ्यं मधुमच्च गव्यम्[72], taking the hand of the bride by the groom—पाणिग्रहण[73], circumambulation of the sacred fire—अग्निप्रदक्षिणा[74], the burning of parched rice in the sacred fire—लाजमोक्ष[75], the sighting of the Dhruva constellation[76], and the applying of wet rice to the forehead of the couple[77].

The absence of the Saptapadī ritual is most significant. After marriage it appears to have been customary for the bridegroom to stay in the house of the father-in-law for a month[78]—a most salutary and human custom as it avoided the necessity of hastily wrenching off the newly wedded girl from the parental roof immediately after the celebration of marriage and gave the groom an opportunity of getting acquainted with his wife's parents and blood relations. This short period must be a very happy time for the married couple—a sweet memory to be cherished in after life—a kind of substitute for the present honeymoon. Another salubrious custom which speaks volumes of the aesthetic temperament and sound common sense of the ancient Indians, strictly enjoined the married couple for three days

68. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 28.
69. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 11.
70. " VII. 25.
71. " VII. 27.
72. " VII. 72.
73. " VII. 76.
74. " VII. 79.
75. " VII. 80.
76. " VII. 85.
77. " VII. 88.
78. " VIII. 20.

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after marriage to sleep on the ground[79], not to eat any exciting aphrodisiacs nor even to take salt, and to remain absolutely abstemious (व्रतस्थ). It is often said that most marriages are consummated with the rape of the unsophisticated young bride and the above precaution was meant to prevent such unhappy incidents which sometimes poisoned the relations of the couple at the very commencement of their sex-life.

Marriage among the Hindus both ancient and modern is a sacrament and not a contract as in other communities. Husband and wife it is thought are brought together by a kind of unerring predestination and as a result of the tie of debt (ऋणानुबन्ध) incurred in previous births. Thus a wife or husband may follow his or her mate in several incarnations. Thus Sītā is said to have been the reincarnation of Lakṣmī[80] and Pārvatī that of Satī the daughter of Dakṣa Prajāpati. Hence the long-cherished ambition among high-born Hindu ladies to follow their deceased husbands on the funeral pyre. It is for this reason that the idea of divorce does not find favour among high class Hindus.

The Indo-Aryans with a view to find a satisfactory solution to the difficult sex-problem had resort to various devices, viz., polygamy, polyandry, patriarchal family system, matriarchal family system and religious prostitution etc.

The custom of polygamy finds constant references in Kālidāsian works.[81] Kaṇva when giving his parting parental advice to Śakuntalā on the eve of her departure to

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79. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 94. (See Mallinātha's commentary.)

80. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 24.
Kumārasambhava I. 21.
Raghuvaṁśa VII. 15 : मनो हि जन्मान्तरसंगतिज्ञम् ।

81. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 33.
„ VI. 48.
„ IX. 7, 18.
„ XVI. 58.
Śākuntala Act III, p. 105 : बहुवल्लभा राजानः श्रयन्ते ।
„ III. 17

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her husband's residence, among other injunctions advises her to be courteous[82] to her cowives. The custom of polygamy arose out of the conditions and environments in which the Indo-Aryans found themselves in India. When they penetrated into the heart of the country, they had to wage a constant and strenuous war with the aborigines who surrounded them on all sides, especially with the powerful Dravidians. Such wars necessarily drained and depleted the male population resulting in a serious disproportion in the numerical strength between the two sexes. To leave a large proportion of the womanhood sexually unengaged was a grave danger to a community living in the midst of barbarous tribes. The ancient Indians had a horror of वर्णसंकर[83] i.e. intermixture of blood between themselves and the supposed inferior aborigines. Even in the present times it is thought by some American writers that intermixture and gradual infiltration of the Negroid blood in the American Anglo-Saxon race is the most fearful menace to their community. The brutal persecution of the Negroes in America and the enforced segregation of the Asiatics in South Africa is entirely due to the fear of being racially submerged in the black or brown majority living in immediate contact with the white races. The ancient Aryans gradually spreading themselves on the Indian continent had in their own way to face the same difficult problem.

The principal means of livelihood, moreover, were agriculture and cattle breeding, virgin soil and grazing grounds being plentiful. The leaders of the community felt dire need of sufficient hands to both fight with the enemies and till the soil. The Aryan race then making inroads in India was young and virile. It was therefore thought advisable to permit plurality of wives with a view to absorb the superfluous females in the community as well as to encourage

82. *Śākuntala* IV. 17 : कुरु प्रियसखीवृत्तिं सपत्नीजने ।

83. *Bhagavadgītā*, I. 41-42 :
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसंकरः ॥
संकरो नरकायैव..... ।

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the much needed rapid growth of population. The shrewd Aryans could not have been unaware of the dangers inherent in the custom of polygamy. But it was a choice of the lesser evil.

As stated above, harems of kings and other rich men were veritable plague-spots of intrigue and virulent jealousies. Kālidāsa aptly describes the harem of king Duṣyanta as अन्तःपुरकालकूट[84]. In the three dramas of Kālidāsa, especially *Mālavikāgnimitra*, the plots more or less revolve on some harem intrigue or other.

In describing the high and self-less character of Dhāriṇī in *Mālavikāgnimitra*, the poet tries to justify and even praise her generous, forgiving and even helpful attitude towards the king's disloyalty to herself and his craving for fresh youth and beauty, by paying her the following doubtful compliment : "Good wives fond of their husbands serve them (make them happy) even by uniting them with rival cowives, just as a big river on her way to the sea, carries to him along with herself fresh tributaries by hundreds."[85] How far the poor ladies enjoyed this pandering to the amorous caprices of their wayward consorts, is difficult to understand. At the best it may be said that they were the victims of circumstances.

One conspicuous fact which strikes even a superficial reader of Sanskrit literature is the extreme courtesy and consideration with which the women of the upper class, at any rate, were generally treated. This quality was known as Strīdākṣiṇya or gallantry and was considered an essential virtue in a polished gentleman of good family. This habit appears to have reached such an exaggerated level that it often savoured of sheer hypocrisy and sycophancy! In *Mālavikāgnimitra* the king's behaviour towards Irāvatī is an ostentatious display of exaggerated courtesy. She appears to be a proud and irascible queen and even went to

84. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 173.

85. *Mālavikāgnimitra* V. 19 :

प्रतिपक्षेणापि पतिं सेवन्ते भर्तृवत्सलाः साध्व्यः ।
अन्यसरितां शतानि हि समुद्रगाः प्रापयन्त्युदधिम् ॥

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the length of calling her husband "an unmitigated rascal"[86] and essayed to strike him with her girdle. Mālavikā was a fresh acquisition and therefore flattery in her case comes naturally to the enamoured king. He inquires with great solicitude whether her delicate foot after striking the hard Aśoka tree is not really hurt.[87] He longs to dry up the lacquer freshly applied to Mālavikā's feet by softly blowing a breeze with his mouth.[88] Later on he cajoles Mālavikā by professing himself her humble slave.[89] In *Meghadūta* the Yakṣa portrays his wife on a stone-slab and then he tries to draw himself lying at her feet[90], but is unable to complete the picture owing to his fast gathering tears which seriously obscured his vision.

After severe sexual exertions, the Yakṣa says it was habitual with him to tenderly shampoo the thighs and other afflicted limbs of his dear wife.[91] The art of delicate flattery of the finer sex was cultivated to a remarkable extent. In *Vikramorvaśīya* the king in a delicate and tactful manner expresses his yearning for the company of Urvaśī[92], whose acquaintance with him was very recent. He says, "Your friends, oh lady !, are in a very depressed and anxious condition of mind ; and what wonder ? For even a person whose eyes your sight blessed but once, afterwards feels restless, and miserable in your absence. Imagine then the state of mind of your dear old friends from whom you were forcibly separated."

Another instance of sublime flattery appears later on in the same dramatic piece. After Urvaśī was securely united to the king, the queen Uśīnarī having withdrawn all opposition to their unrestrained intercourse, the king addressing Vidūṣaka in the presence of Urvaśī says, "O

86. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act III, p. 59 : शठ, अविश्वसनीयहृदयोऽसि ।
87. ,, III. 18.
88. ,, V. 13.
89. ,, IV. 12.
90. *Meghadūta* II. 42.
91. ,, II. 33.
92. *Vikramorvaśīya* I. 11.

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friend, I thought that the most momentous occasion in my life was my installation as an emperor holding absolute sway over a host of feudatory princes, but I now find that a more joyful and auspicious occasion was in store for me, viz., my attainment of the unique privilege of serving the feet of this august lady."[93]

Note also the odious hypocrisy of the hero in *Vikramorvaśīya*. When his craving for Urvaśī was satisfied owing to the kind permission of his queen to freely associate with her rival, he addresses the queen Uśīnarī as follows: "Oh great lady! you have the absolute and unrestrained power to give me away to any other woman or to take me away from her. Oh you suspicious one, you do me an injustice in thinking that I have ceased to be your humble slave."[94]

Also the flamboyant and pompous way of addressing the queen Dhāriṇī when she was requested by Agnimitra not to get up to welcome him as she had hurt her foot owing to a fall from the swing which was deliberately manœuvred by his wily friend Vidūṣaka to further the scheme of bringing the king and Mālavikā together[95], is indeed a masterpiece of hypocrisy and insincerity, for very probably the king himself was aware of and may have connived at Vidūṣaka's mischief. Instances of this kind can be multiplied to any extent. It was the prevailing fashion to be outwardly courteous and inwardly disloyal to a woman, at any rate among the upper classes of society. It must be admitted that the angle of vision of the male towards his mate was more or less tainted with a somewhat hedonistic and possessive complex. The heroes of Kālidāsa could not have been unaware what acute pangs of jealousy and heartache they were inflicting upon the poor women of the harem by their never-ceasing pursuit of fresh faces and forms, yet beyond outward courtesy and politeness they thought that nothing more was due to their old and cast-off wives. The piteous wail of Haṁsapādikā, one of the queens of Duṣyanta,

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93. *Vikramorvaśīya* III. 19
94. „ III. 14.
95. *Mālavikāgnimitra* IV. 3.

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in the beginning of Act V of *Śākuntala,* casts a lurid light on the unhappy condition of the denizens of the king's harems.[96] The law as well as convention made the husband the absolute lord and master of his wives' destiny. The word 'Pramadāmiṣa' used by the poet in *Raghuvaṁśa* is somewhat significant.[97] The sensuous, pleasure-loving man may regard a beautiful girl as only a delectable piece of female flesh !

It must be said that Dilīpa, Raghu, Aja and Rāma, the earlier kings of the Ikṣvāku dynasty were more loyal to their consorts. In Aja's memorable elegy to his deceased wife he sets up an almost perfect ideal of conjugal relationship.[98] But it is only a sublime ideal rarely attained in actual day-to-day life by kings and rich people.

The character of Rāma as portrayed by Vālmīki and after him by Kālidāsa and others appears vitiated by his treatment of his wife Sītā and his decapitation of Śambūka. As regards the latter act he was perhaps the victim of the prevailing religious ideology and as a king he had to obey the laws laid down by the law-givers of his time. Bhavabhūti in his *Uttararāmacarita* has done his best to white-wash and gloss over the misguided acts of Rāma in both the abovementioned cases.

Rāma's attitude towards Sītā in spite of all poetical verbiage and the special pleadings of his admirers appears to be that of a high-browed and masterful husband. Even Bhavabhūti makes an unconscious admission of this fact in his *Uttararāmacarita.*[99] It appears as if loitering on the banks of Godāvarī playing with swans was a grave offence

96. *Śākuntala* V. 1.
97. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 31 :
आदास्यमानः प्रमदामिषं तदावृत्य पन्थानमजस्य तस्थौ ।
98. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 67.
99. *Uttararāmacarita* III. 38 :
अस्मिन्नेव लतागृहे त्वमभवस्तन्मार्गदत्तेक्षणः
सा हंसैः कृतकौतुका चिरमभूद्गोदावरीसैकते ।
आयान्त्या परिदुर्मनायितमिव त्वां वीक्ष्य बद्धस्तया
कातर्यादरविन्दकुड्मलनिभो बद्धः प्रणामाञ्जलिः ॥

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which must be wiped out by a very humble apology! The words put in his mouth by Kālidāsa in *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV.41 make the case much worse. In effect he says that he attacked and killed Rāvaṇa not so much to get back Sītā but rather to preserve and vindicate his prestige and dignity as a Kṣatriya king and a scion of a lofty royal race! The proud snake, he says, when he is trodden upon, bites the offender not because he craves for a few drops of blood from the wound of his victim but merely to avenge himself of the insult. This discourteous admission reveals the disdainful attitude of the lordly male for his weaker mate. Rāma's treatment of his loyal, high-born and saintly wife can hardly be justified or excused although after the later deification of the great and mighty king various attempts have been made to gloss over or even justify his conduct. Kālidāsa also has indulged in a kind of special pleading on behalf of his favourite hero.[100] The exile of Sītā by Rāma with full knowledge that she was absolutely chaste and innocent merely to satisfy the wicked malice of some low-minded boor, is a permanent blot on his escutcheon which it is difficult to wipe out altogether. Nothing can be grander and more dignified than the message sent by Sītā through Lakṣmaṇa to her cruel lord and master after the discovery of her unmerited desertion.[101] The highly colourful and moving scene described in Canto XV of *Raghuvaṁśa* which ends with Sītā's disappearance in the bowels of the mother Earth is one of the high water-marks of the great genius of Kālidāsa.[102] In this scene Rāma cuts a very poor figure and in contrast with him Sītā stands out as infinitely superior in her fortitude, lofty self-respect and indomitable character. Even a breath of suspicion cast on the chastity of a good woman is an intolerable insult. In spite of this, Sītā has patiently borne one ordeal by fire at Laṅkā to set at rest her husband's suspicions and proved beyond doubt her immaculate purity. When after her

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100. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 35.
101. „ XIV. 61-67.
102. „ XV. 76-84.

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cowardly desertion she was again called upon to prove her chastity before a crowd consisting mostly of the proletariat of Ayodhyā, as a condition precedent to her re-acceptance by her husband, her great patience was exhausted and her self-respect wounded to the quick asserted itself in a manner worthy of a high-souled royal lady. It is significant that notwithstanding this great and unmerited affront she does not address one discourteous or angry word to her cruel and erring husband but indignantly spurning all further association with him, ends her life by voluntary entering the bowels of the Earth! She invokes the all-embracing and omniscient Goddess of Earth as follows: "If I was never disloyal to my husband in word, thought and deed, Oh Goddess, take me within thy kindly bosom." The Earth has no other alternative but to do her bidding whether Rāma liked it or not.

This superiority complex of the male was not peculiar to India but characterized the intercourse between the sexes in all countries and communities in ancient times and it cannot be said that even at present it is not poisoning the social life of the people to a certain extent.

Woman was often depicted as an untrustworthy, wily, selfish creature possessing in a great measure untutored and instinctive shrewdness which she often used against the simple-minded guileless male![103]

A married woman had to reside in the family of her husband from the time of her marriage onwards whether she was happy or unhappy there.[104] Even a flying visit to her parents' relations was rarely permitted to her, much less a long stay, which was considered disreputable and likely to give rise to an unsavoury scandal. Śakuntalā inquires of Kaṇva at the time of her departure to her husband's place as to when she would see the hermitage again and is informed by the old sage that she will be at liberty to visit the much-loved home of her childhood only in her old age after the coronation of her son![105]

103. *Śākuntala* V. 22.
104. " V. 17.
105. " IV. 19.

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It was firmly believed in ancient Indo-Aryan society that every girl was destined to be married, that she was only a temporary trust in the hands of her parents who were blissfully relieved of the onerous responsibility by marrying her to a suitable husband.[106] She may be compared to the rice-plants (कलम), referred to in *Raghuvaṁśa*[107], which will not bear fruit unless they were rooted out and transplanted elsewhere. Kaṇva in the famous Fourth Act of *Śākuntala* says that his mind has attained peace and tranquillity by sending Śakuntalā to her husband. An unmarried girl as a rule was not allowed to visit a stranger's residence.[108] Śakuntalā's friends had therefore to part company with her on the outskirts of the तपोवन. Only Gautamī, an old matron, was allowed to accompany her to her husband's palace.

There is no reference to widow remarriage in the entire range of Kālidāsa's literature. Marriage, being regarded as a sacrament, was credited with creating an indissoluble bond which endured beyond death. There is reference to widowhood in one or two places.[109] It may be that re-marriages of widows were permitted among the lower class of people. It appears that the custom of tonsure of widows existed in times known to Kālidāsa at any rate in southern parts of India. The word अनलकान्[110] is explained by Mallinātha as हतभर्तृकतयालक्तसंस्कारशून्यान्. The expression may more correctly be interpreted as "devoid of hair", i.e., tonsured. It may be surmised that the custom of tonsure was in vogue among the Dravidians of the South and might have been copied by the Aryans later on.

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106. *Śākuntala* IV. 21.

107. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 37.

108. *Śākuntala* Act IV, p. 144 :
इमे अपि प्रदेये। न युक्तमनयोस्तत्र गन्तुम्।

109. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act V, p. 99 : नवीकृतवैधव्यदुःखया।
Raghuvaṁśa IX. 14.

110. „ IX. 14.

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SATĪ

The custom of Satī prevailed among the upper classes. Rati in Canto V of *Kumārasambhava* prepares to immolate herself in fire with the object of joining her husband in the next world. This horrible custom survived right up to recent times. It was the outward manifestation of the extreme loyalty and affection for the deceased husband for which Indian womanhood is justly famous and to which there is hardly any parallel elsewhere.

In Bengal where the Dāyabhāga system of Hindu Law prevails, this custom assumed an unusually ugly aspect. The widow of a deceased coparcener who could enforce partition of the joint family estate and take away to herself her husband's share, was considered a perpetually hanging sword over the head of the joint family and as such was the object of bitter and unmitigated hatred, suspicion and fear. The kinsmen therefore tried their level best to get rid of her by her self-immolation by working on her feelings or even by doping her so that she would be unresistingly led to the funeral pyre or, as a last resort, if she somehow or other escaped being burned alive, to break her on the wheel of privation, humiliation and torment in various ways. The Hindu population of Bengal converted to Mahomedanism was largely recruited out of this unfortunate widowhood of that province. In view of the hard life prescribed for Proṣitabhartṛkās (the wives of absent husbands) it may be safely surmised that the life of the widow must have been an altogether unenviable one. It appears that clever and learned widows in ancient times with the object of improving their position in life took to yellow cloth (काषायवस्त्रग्रहण) but such instances must be very rare.

PROṢITABHARTṚKĀ

Next to the widows Proṣitabhartṛkās, i.e., the wives of absent husbands or husbands gone on a long sojourn were

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subjected to many hardships and privations.[111] The Proṣitabhartṛkā was to renounce all kinds of sports and recreations (क्रीडा), cease decorating her body in any manner, desist from taking part in social functions or festive occasions, nor even indulge in a heart-free laugh and avoid visiting strangers. What a trying ordeal for an innocent woman! In those times as the means of communication and travel were very meagre, a person who went out on a long journey sometimes took years to return home and thus consigned his poor wife to the veritable hell of a life.

The Proṣitabhartṛkā was not to tie up her hair but to leave them loose and dishevelled about her face. Kālidāsa compares the pale face of the Yakṣa's wife partly covered with her loose tresses to a lack-lustre moon surrounded by dark clouds.[112] The "grass-widow" as a Proṣitabhartṛkā is termed in modern parlance was ordained to spend her time in religious or devotional occupations[113] or in sketching the likeness of her husband as she imagined him to be in his bereaved and love-lorn condition[114] or in speaking about him to her friends or at any rate to the domestic birds who were his pets also[115]. She always slept on the bare ground[116], cast off her ornaments[117] and did not touch wine.[118]

PROSTITUTION

There are references to prostitution in the writings of Kālidāsa. Prostitution is the traverse side of married life, and though it may sound somewhat paradoxical, is the direct result of the institution of marriage. The more rigid

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111. *Yājñavalkya-Smṛti* I. 84 :
क्रीडां शरीरसंस्कारं समाजोत्सवदर्शनम् ।
हास्यं परगृहे यानं त्यजेत्प्रोषितभर्तृका ॥
112. *Meghaduta* II. 21.
113. „ II. 22.
114. „ II. 22.
115. „ II. 22.
116. „ II. 25.
117. „ II. 25.
118. „ II. 32.

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the married life in any society, the need of prostitution becomes stronger. However prosperous and well regulated a community may be, there is bound to be some proportion of its male population which either owing to economic circumstances or other reasons such as inadaptable or lopsided temperament is bound to remain outside the sphere of married life or seriously dissatisfied with it. There must therefore be some way to satisfy the irresistible natural urge of this very large number of persons whatever Calvinistic or Gandhistic puritanism may have to say to the contrary. Nature has its own clearly defined and all-sweeping ways which do not take much count of man-made institutions or mawkish sentimentalism. In shaping his life, man must therefore steer clear of direct opposition to or conflict with the stern laws of nature or take the risk of his cherished ideal of society which mainly depends on the sanctity of the marriage tie being swept away and debauched by the terrific forces of nature. Our wise ancestors tried to minimize the evil in many ways and among other devices, freely recognized and regulated, by law and conventions, prostitution as a useful institution. So also matriarchal family, polygamy and even polyandry in special circumstances were devised or recognized, to maintain the equilibrium and stability of social life so far as sex relations and their needs were concerned. A suitable niche was found by the ancient Indo-Aryans in their social economy and religious code for prostitution, and the Paurāṇic story of Mahānandā shows that prostitution had a definite and well-recognized place in society and an appropriate and well-devised code of conduct. In Śudraka's *Mṛcchakaṭika* the poet gives a blunt out-spoken and graphic description of the duties of a prostitute.[119]

Kālidāsa refers to prostitution in various places. The period with which the poet was dealing was noted for peace and prosperity in a remarkable degree and it is but natural that hedonistic and pleasure-loving tendencies were conspicuously prevalent among the people. Curiously enough,

119. *Mṛcchakaṭika* I. 31, 32.

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this craving for pleasure and physical comfort was however salubriously tempered and controlled by an ascetic and rigorously abstemious ideal which had for its object the emancipation of the soul from the trammels of worldly existence.

The गृहस्थ or house-holder was at liberty to satisfy his physical desires and needs in all legitimate ways and prostitution was not forbidden to him. In *Mṛcchakaṭika* Cārudatta's character as a धीरोदात्त नायक (noble and fearless hero) is not in the least derogated from or tarnished on account of his association with the prostitute Vasantasenā. A married woman was strictly sacrosanct, but a prostitute was accessible to all and sundry. On the Nīchaiḥ hill (वामनगिरि), the poet says, unmistakable traces were found in the shape of various odours resulting from the sex contact with hired women (prostitutes) of the youths of Vidiśā endowed with vigorous and irresistible manly might.[120] In the Mahākāla temple of Ujjayinī dancing girls (वेश्याs) are referred to as wafting jewel-handled chowries on the idol of Śiva.[121] The Yakṣas, supposed to be a semi-divine race with special privileges as regards sex life, are mentioned as pleasantly passing their time in the Vaibhrāja garden near Alakāvatī in company with musicians and prostitutes.[122] In *Vikramorvaśīya* the heroine of the play, Urvaśī, happens to be a celestial prostitute whom the queen Uśīnarī graciously permitted to have free and open intercourse with the king.[123]

There is a reference to Vāṇinīs or Vidagdhavanitās in *Raghuvaṁśa*.[124] These appear to be a class of superior prostitutes distinguished by their skill in fine arts and well-known by their learning and culture. They belonged to the same class as the Greek coutezans of old whose houses were freely visited by kings, ministers and other distinguished persons without any consciousness of guilt or

120. *Meghadūta* I. 25.
121. „ I. 35.
122. „ II. 3, 8.
123. *Vikramorvaśīya*, p. 76.
124. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 75.

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blame. It is said that during the reign of king Dilīpa even the wayward breeze was afraid of displacing the garments of the Vāṇinīs found asleep on the way to their places of recreation or assignation—much less was there any danger of their being insulted by any rude person.

There is also reference to Nartakīs (dancing girls) in *Raghuvaṁśa*[125] where Agnivarṇa is mentioned as showing to them the errors in their artistic performance by personal demonstration. The Parijanāṅganās mentioned in v. 23 of Canto XIX, belonged more or less to the same class, being girls of easy virtue.

In those times girls with special attainments in music and other kindred arts were sent as a present (उपायन) to kings and other great persons.[126] It is difficult to know what was the exact status of such girls in the family to which they were thus grafted. Some kind of humane form of slavery appears to have been in vogue.

ABHISĀRIKĀ

Abhisārikā means a young woman who of her own free will goes to meet her lover. She may be of a good family, a virgin or even a married woman. She wears a dress characteristic of her voluptuous and excited mental condition and daring adventure (अभिसारिकावेष). She is referred to in *Meghadūta*.[127] Such extra-marital love affairs are more or less common in all communities and countries but in ancient India there appears to have been a frank recognition of such love episodes.

In verse 78 of Canto IV of *Raghuvaṁśa* a clan of foresters or highlanders is mentioned among whom sex relations appear to be very loose, wholly voluntary and of a temporary or casual nature. These are therefore called Utsavasaṅketas, i.e., communities where persons of the opposite sex used to make assignations to indulge in riotous sexual orgies.

125. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 14, 19.
126. *Mālavikāgnimitra*, pp. 88, 95 and 99.
127. *Meghadūta* I. 37; II. 9.

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In India the institution of marriage, as has been already stated, was regarded as a sacrament and not as a mere mundane contract. The husband is supposed to recreate himself in the womb of his wife.[128] A man after his birth in this world has to liquidate three kinds of debts. The debt to his ancestors or manes (पितृs)[129] can only be satisfied by giving birth to a son. It was the firm belief among the Hindus that if there was no male child in the family to offer to the manes every year on the appointed day rice-balls and oblations of water, they would be starved in heaven.[130] A son, therefore, born of pure parentage ensured for the parents well-being in this world as well as hereafter.[131] Thus it was the need of providing for oblations for the deceased ancestors that resulted in the custom of adoption which enables, as a last resort, a sonless couple to equip themselves with a workable substitute for a son.

The wife moreover is a सहधर्मिणी—an associate or colleague in the discharge of religious duties. It is not permissible for the husband to perform an important religious function without the co-operation of his wife. When Rāma performed Aśvamedha after his desertion of Sītā, he had to instal her golden image by his side.[132] In case of dire need even a betel-nut (Mar. *Supārī*) is made to represent a dead or absent wife.

In Sanskrit literature there has been a persistent and well-designed attempt to subordinate the purely physical aspect of marriage to the spiritual and religious needs of man. The highest ideal of marriage was marriage for the sake of children (प्रजायै गृहमेधिनाम्).[133] This necessarily excludes mere "lust of the flesh" or craving for carnal enjoyment as the only or even an important motive of the Hindu marriage tie. It is perhaps this sublimation or exaltation of purely physical mating which is responsible for the comparative

128. *Śākuntala* VI. 24.
129. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 20.
130. *Śākuntala* VI. 25; *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 66, 67.
131. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 69.
132. „ XV. 61.
133. „ I. 7.

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purity of sex relationship and conjugal loyalty especially among females which is observable in this country almost upto the present time. In recent times the Indians, at any rate the educated among them, appear to be fast veering round to the western ideal of expediency, worldly convenience and physical well-being as the main factor in marriage relationship, but time may come when they will look back with regret to the spiritual and religious ideal of marriage with its old-world enduring affection and fidelity. It is doubtful whether a purely commercial or biological view of married life is likely to conduce to the greater domestic happiness of the people or stability of society.

WINES AND SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS

Another salient feature of Kālidāsian society was the free and unrestrained indulgence in alcohol. It appears that the art of distillation had reached a high level of perfection. There were various kinds of wines and alcoholic spirits manufactured and patronized in India in those days and they were named differently according to their ingredients and mode of distillation. Sīdhu[134] was distilled out of sugar-cane juice, Nārikelāsava[135] from cocoanut water and Puṣpāsava[136] from the essence of flowers. Madhu[137], Vāruṇī[138], Kādambarī[139], Madya[140], Āsava[141], Madirā[142], Hālā[143], Surā[144], Śauṇḍikā[145] were the various names by which wines and spirituous liquors were known.

134. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* II. 18.
135. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 42.
136. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* IV. 11.
137. „ I. 3.
138. *Kumārasambhava* IV. 12.
139. *Śakuntala* Act VI, p. 188.
140. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* V. 10.
141. „ V. 5.
142. *Meghadūta* II. 15.
143. „ I. 49.
144. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* V. 5.
145. *Śākuntala*, p. 188. *Śauṇḍikā* appears to be an alcoholic drink of a cheap kind.

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Among Kṣatriyas or the ruling and fighting caste, indulgence in alcohol appears to be much more frequent than among the Brahmins. The common people and the lower classes were also more or less addicted to drinking. Drinking was mainly indulged in, as an aid of sexual dalliance and enjoyment[146] or, especially among the lower classes, as a means of contracting or cementing friendships or of social intercourse[147]. Indians manufactured fragrant wines or made them fragrant by adding mango blossoms or Pāṭala flowers.[148] Alcoholic drinks were then as they are even today supposed to be powerful aphrodisiacs and were supposed to render conjugal ecstasy more enduring and intense. It is said that the erstwhile Italian dictator Mussolini at one time took steps to make wines cheap enough so as to bring them within the reach of the poorest of his subjects, because he believed that profuse wine-drinking among the masses led to a rapid increase of population by increasing sex activity, and thus supplied ample man-power for aggressive warfare. In the case of ladies, indulgence in drinking naturally led to indistinct speech and an unsteady, rolling gait, but this was considered by their lovers as a decided embellishment to their natural charms.[149] Balarāma the mighty warrior and Kṛṣṇa's elder brother was reputed to be a great drunkard but he subsequently renounced the habit altogether in his declining years.[150] It however appears as a rule that wines and alcoholic drinks were confined to the harems, or inner or private apartments. Drinking was not publicly indulged in except perhaps in the Holi Festival (Raṅgapañcamī), nor was offering wine recognized as a part of the hospitable duty of a householder.

146. *Kumārasambhava* IV. 12; VIII. 77.
Raghuvaṁśa VIII. 68; IX. 36; XIX. 11, 12, 46.
Meghadūta I. 49; II. 3.
147. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 188.
148. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 46.
149. *Kumārasambhava* IV. 12.
Mālavikāgnimitra, p. 47.
Meghadūta II. 32.
150. *Meghadūta* I. 49.

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Even highplaced ladies like the queen Irāvatī in *Mālavikāgnimitra* had no horror of being drunk during daytime. Irāvatī appeared to be under the impression that inebriation enhanced her charms.[151] It was supposed that amorous gestures and glances of young women could never achieve perfection unless they indulged in spirituous liquors and that the mouth of a young and beautiful woman should be fragrant with the sweet odour of wine.[152]

In religious and auspicious ceremonies such as Yajña, Aśvamedha and Marriage there is hardly any mention of wines and spirits in Kālidāsa's writings. It is curious that the famous inebriating Vedic drink, Soma, also does not find any reference anywhere.

There were grogshops for common people.[153] For the kings and rich people there were private drinking saloons[154] in their own premises.[155]

In this place it will not be inappropriate to dilate on the place of alcohol in the social life of the civilized peoples of the world. It will be conceded at once that among the present world population by far the vast majority are more or less votaries of alcoholic drinks or other dopes of various kinds. The Mahomedan religion puts a strict veto on drinks of all kinds. Mahomedan literature, however, such as *The Arabian Nights* which deals with the golden age of Moslem rule in Baghdad, or the poetry of that famous exponent of hedonistic philosophy, Umar Khayyam, bears ample evidence to the remarkable partiality of these people to alcoholic drinks of various kinds. Among Hindus also drinking is regarded as an objectionable vice but they are hardly better in this respect than the Mahomedans. Among other communities such as Christians and Jews, drinking instead of being prohibited is expressly prescribed for cer-

151. *Mālavikāgnimitra*, pp. 47 and 49.

152. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* V. 5 : सुरासवामोदितवक्त्रपङ्कजाः ।

153. *Śākuntala*, p. 188 : शौण्डिकापणम् ।

154. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 42 : आपानभूमयः ।

155. " XIX. 11.

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tain ceremonial purposes. A drunkard, as is natural, is generally shunned and despised everywhere, but the general mental attitude appears to be that "alcohol is a good friend but a bad master".

Certain remedies were prescribed as antidotes against the undesirable effects of alcohol. Kālidāsa refers to one of such remedies in *Mālavikāgnimitra.*[156] He mentions a certain kind of sugar (मत्स्यण्डिका) having globules like the eggs of a fish round about it. As a rule plenty of ghee with sugar is still supposed to be an effective remedy against excessive intoxication.

FOOD

In the matter of food the ancient Indians lived on a mixed diet i.e. animal and vegetable food in suitable proportions and according to individual taste. Animal food was never banned for any class of people or caste. Superiority or inferiority never depended on the mere question of food. In *Śākuntala,* Vidūṣaka, a Brahmin of Brahmins, is said to have lived in the jungle on food mostly consisting of flesh roasted in fire by means of iron-tongs, in company with his royal friend king Duṣyanta when the latter was on a hunting expedition.[157] Demons or Rākṣasas, as some of the aboriginal tribes were called, lived almost entirely on animal flesh as they were averse to agricultural pursuits unlike their Aryan conquerors. They were therefore called क्रव्याद्[158] or पिशिताशन[159]. क्रव्याद् means the devourer of raw meat. The description of Tāḍakā in vv. 15-17 of Canto XI of *Raghuvaṁśa* may be deliberately colourful and exaggerated to excite terror and disgust in the reader, but it proves beyond doubt that most of the aboriginal tribes in ancient India were carnivorous people. She (i.e. Tāḍakā) was चलकपालकुण्डला i.e. one whose ear ornaments fashioned out

156. *Mālavikāgnimitra,* p. 42 : सीधुपानोद्वेजितस्य मत्स्यण्डिकोपनता ।

157. *Śākuntala* Act II, p. 55 : शूल्यमांसभूयिष्ठ आहारो भुज्यते ।

158. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 16.

159. *Śākuntala* III. 24.

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of human skulls oscillated violently owing to her rapid and disorderly gait (probably because she was also heavily drunk). Her girdle was made of entrails of human beings killed by her. Lavaṇa, a Rākṣasa chief, the son of Kumbhīnasī (presumably the father was unknown) as a rule returned home with a load of dead animals for his daily repast.[160] Poor people like fishermen sometimes lived on crocodile's flesh.[161]

It is surprising that there was no restriction to the killing of cows for food. On the contrary it was considered meritorious to kill cows for the purpose of feeding guests. Rantideva was a king of the lunar race, being sixth in descent from Bharata. He was reputed to have been slaughtering thousands of cattle every day to feed the Brahmins and other guests so much so that from the copious flow of blood dripping from their hides a river named Carmaṇvatī[162] sprang into existence. The present descendants, if any, of the same king would consider themselves duty bound to fight a Mahomedan if he attempts to take the life of even an old decrepit cow for whom death would, indeed, be a kind relief. It is interesting to note the amazing change in the mental attitude and view-point of the orthodox Hindus regarding killing of kine in the course of two thousand years. The present-day squeamishness and almost hysterical antipathy towards eating animal flesh, especially beef, had no existence at all in the times of which Kālidāsa wrote. Jainas and the followers of Vallabhācārya (the so-called Vaiṣṇavas) must in a great measure be held responsible for this psychology among some portion of the Hindu population mostly in the southern part of India against eating animal flesh of any kind. Anchorites and those who took to an austere and religious life mostly maintained themselves on vegetables, grains and fruits

160. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 15.

161. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 184 : विस्रगन्धी गोधादी ।

162. *Meghadūta* I. 45.

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(वन्यवृत्ति).[163] Sītā when she was deserted by Rāma is said to have lived in Vālmīki's hermitage on exclusively vegetable food. So also Dilīpa when residing in Vasiṣṭha's hermitage with the object of attending upon and serving the divine cow was ordered by his preceptor to sustain himself on the simple fare of an ascetic forester.

The staple food for ascetics and anchorites was the Nīvāra corn.[164] It was the natural product of the soil and did not require special cultivation. The hermits gathered or gleaned it from open fields and forests and therefore it was called Uñcha.[165] The ascetics refrained from ploughing the ground for fear of killing the life which existed below the surface of the soil, and moreover had little time for agricultural pursuits as they were wholly engrossed in their religious duties.

Ghee (cow's ghee) was also the favourite food of the people. Freshly made ghee was much appreciated.[166] Urvaśī the celestial damsel when she agreed to live with Purūravas is said to have stipulated that she would live on earth on ghee alone.

Honey was also much favoured for ceremonial as well as alimentary purposes.[167]

Among all classes, especially among hermits and ascetics, fruits were a favourite food and hermitages abounded with fruit trees of all kinds.[168] Cow's milk was also considered a valuable food. There was no trace in those days of unthinking fanaticism or lop-sided sentimentalism regarding the question of food. Every article of food was judged purely on its nutritious and health-giving quality and a

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163. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 82 :
वन्येन सा वल्कलिनी शरीरं पत्युः प्रजासंततये बभार ।
Raghuvaṁśa I. 88.

164. *Śākuntala* I. 13; *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 9.

165. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 8.

166. „ I. 45 : हैयंगवीनम् ।

167. „ VII. 18 : सरत्नमर्घ्यं मधुपर्कमिश्रम् ।

168. „ XIII. 46.

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well-balanced dietary suited to all conditions of life conduced to the health and happiness of the people.

There is a reference to पिण्डखर्जूर in *Śākuntala*.[169] So also Modakas, i.e. round ball-like sweetmeat, find a mention in one or two places.[170] These references are placed in the mouth of Vidūṣaka who is always pictured as a noted glutton. The winter season has been referred to by the poet as being rich in many sweetmeats made of raw sugar and of delectable fresh Śāli corn.[171] In *Vikramorvaśīya* Vidūṣaka speaks of शिखरिणी and रसाल.[172] शिखरिणी is a dish of curd, sugar and spices. Generally this dish is mixed up with some fruit such as plantain. रसाल is the better kind of ripe mango fruit. It will have to be admitted that ancient Indians were not a gluttonous race. In Kālidāsa's writing and also other similar Sanskrit works, there are very few references to edibles, dishes or sweetmeats. In *Ṛtusaṁhāra* the only reference to edibles is in Canto V where various kinds of preparations of raw sugar and palatable Śāli corn are mentioned. A gluttonously inclined poet may well have presented to his readers a large list of edibles in each canto suitable to every season. In other works of Kālidāsa except in the mouth of the Brahmin Vidūṣaka there is hardly any reference to toothsome dishes or attractive sweetmeats. ताम्बूल, a pad of betel-leaves mixed with various well-known ingredients, is also mentioned in *Ṛtusaṁhāra*.[173]

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169. *Śākuntala* Act II, p. 70 :
पिण्डखर्जूरैरुद्वेजितस्य तिन्तिण्यामभिलाषो भवेत् ।

170. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act III, p. 65 :
खण्डमोदकसदृश उदितो राजा ओषधीनाम् ।
Śākuntala Act II, p. 62 : किं मोदकखण्डिकायाम् ।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act IV, p. 81 : स्वस्तिवाचनमोदकैः कुक्षिं पूरयित्वा ।

171. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* V. 16.

172. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act III, p. 71 :
अहमपि यदा शिखरिणीं रसालं च न लभे तदा तदेव चिन्तयन्नासादयामि सुखम् ।

173. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* V. 5 : गृहीतताम्बूलविलेपनस्रजः ।

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ĀŚRAMAS

The most notable feature of ancient Hindu life is its division into four Āśramas i.e. modes of life. In no other civilized society do we find a parallel to this wonderful dispensation. The four Āśramas[174] were as follows: (1) *Brahmacarya,* the life of the student. (2) *Gārhasthya,* the state of the citizen and householder—the essentials of which were married life, hospitality, performance of Yajña and other religious duties, procreation of children especially of sons to carry on the traditions of the family. (3) *Vānaprastha*: after reaching the age of fifty years, the life of a forester and hermit, devoted to study, contemplation and a rigid life of religious discipline, almost completely divorced from attachment to worldly pleasures and worldly gains. This āśrama was in a way preparatory of the last stage in life i.e. (4) *Saṁnyāsa*: renunciation of all worldly thoughts and worldly concerns and devotion to an intense and unbroken concentration on the glorious destiny to which man is heir. The last stage in life is reached after a man attains the age of sixtyfive years.

The Gṛhasthāśrama is the very pivot of a man's life. It is aptly styled सर्वभोग्य i.e. useful to everybody.[175] Vānaprastha[176] is intermediate between Gṛhasthāśrama and Saṁnyāsa. The life of Raghu described in the beginning of Canto VIII of *Raghuvaṁśa* points to संन्यासमार्ग, the reason

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174. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 8 :
शैशवेऽभ्यस्तविद्यानां यौवने विषयैषिणाम् ।
वार्द्धके मुनिवृत्तीनां योगेनान्ते तनुत्यजाम् ॥

175. *Śākuntala* II. 14 :
अध्याक्रान्ता वसतिरमुनाप्याश्रमे सर्वभोग्ये ।
Padma-Purāṇa :
यथा वायुं समाश्रित्य वर्तन्ते सर्वजन्तवः ।
गृहस्थाश्रममाश्रित्य वर्तन्ते चतुराश्रमाः ॥

176. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 70 :
मुनिवनतरुच्छायां देव्या तया सह शिश्रिये ।
Raghuvaṁśa VIII. 17 :
अनपायिपदोपलब्धये रघुराप्तैः समियाय योगिभिः ।

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being that after death he did not stand in need of the usual obsequial ceremonies and offerings of oblations.[177] In Canto XVIII king Puṣya having voluntarily renounced the kingdom subjected himself to the guidance and discipline of Jaimini, a noted sage.[178] In *Śākuntala* Act VII Duṣyanta says referring to kings of the Paurava race that after spending the prime of their life in palaces and after fully enjoying all the objects of the senses, they resorted to forest life accompanied by their wives.[179] Brahmacaryāśrama begins with the *Upanayana* or the thread ceremony when the Brahmacārin is initiated to the study of the Vedas and Śāstras. The Gṛhasthāśrama begins with marriage. The Brahmacārin about to enter the married life is called a Snātaka. A Vānaprastha does not sever all connection with the world and worldly relations. He can live with his wife[180] and children may be born to him[181] in the forest hermitage. Thus Duṣyanta thinks that Sarvadamana was the son of a Paurava king who was a Vānaprastha (leading a retired forester's life) in the hermitage of Mārīca. But in the case of a Saṁnyāsin all worldly relationships are strictly banned and marriage becomes impossible. Children born even of a high caste Saṁnyāsin are therefore outcastes. Thus Jñāneśvara the great saint and philosopher and his brothers were ostracized in Maharashtra because their father prior to their birth had become a Saṁnyāsin. Tridaṇḍī Saṁnyāsa was an exception to this rule and such a Saṁnyāsin was allowed to revert to worldly life.

A Brahmacārin after his initiation ceremony (उपनयन) was entrusted to the charge of a कुलगुरु, the head of an academy. Such academies were located in forests away from the contagion of large cities. There were no fees or charges of any kind. On the other hand the pupil was

177. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 26 :
न हि तेन पथा तनुत्यजस्तनयावर्जितपिण्डकाङ्क्षिणः ।
178. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIIXI. 33.
179. *Śākuntala* VII. 20.
180. „ VII. 20 : नियतैकपतिव्रतानि ।
181. „ Act VII, p. 246.

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maintained on simple vegetable diet and cow's milk at the expense of the कुलपति or कुलगुरु. There was no distinction between rich and poor students in these forest academies of ancient India. All pupils had to do manual service irrespective of their caste or social position. Strict discipline and rectitude of behaviour was exacted.

In exceptional cases pupils were required to pay Gurudakṣiṇā, the teacher's fees.[182] It was considered derogatory for a teacher to stipulate for a fee from his pupil.[183] Droṇa the preceptor of Arjuna exacted a promise from his renowned pupil that as his Dakṣiṇā he would conquer the king Drupada and make him do obeisance to him. At one time Drupada and Droṇa were studying together in the same academy. Drupada after he ascended his hereditary throne refused to recognize his poor Brahmin co-student and had treated him with grave discourtesy. As a general rule, no remuneration of any kind was demanded or expected from the pupil who however had to render manual services of many kinds such as attending to the preceptor's kine, bringing *samidhs*, the holy grass, fuel and flowers from the forest and make himself useful in other ways. The period of residence as a pupil was generally twelve years. So that between the ages of twenty and twentyfour a young man attained to the position of a Snātaka and became fit for Gṛhasthāśrama. It was thought a highly meritorious act to make a gift to a Snātaka of wealth sufficient to enable him to start and equip a house for himself and commence his Gṛhasthāśrama.[184]

The duties of Gṛhasthāśrama were well-known and were as follows: To wed a suitable wife to assist and cooperate with him in the performance of the customary religious rites and ceremonies (hence the wife was called सहधर्मिणी), to attend to अग्निहोत्र i.e. keeping the holy fire alight in the house, to perform sacrifices (यज्ञ), to be

182. *Raghuvaṁśa* V: the story of Kautsa the disciple of Varatantu.

183. *Mālavikāgnimitra* I. 17 :

यस्यागमः केवलजीविकायै तं ज्ञानपण्यं वणिजं वदन्ति ।

184. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 17.

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hospitable to guests (अतिथिस), to procreate children especially sons for offering oblations and rice balls to the manes, to enjoy the objects of the senses in all lawful ways and generally to prepare oneself for the next two Āśramas i.e. the Vānaprastha and the Saṁnyāsa. Gṛhasthāśrama also was considered a kind of *tapasyā* or penance if it was lived through according to the precepts of the Śāstras.[185]

It must be stated here that the institution of the Āśramas was based mainly on the principles of *tyāga* (renunciation or selflessness), not self-indulgence and enjoyment, as these latter even in the case of Gṛhasthāśrama were strictly subordinated to service and benevolence. The chief object of marriage was to give birth to sons for paying off the debt due to the manes.[186] This was also the ideal preached by Mahatma Gandhi in recent times. It is the grand principles of *tyāga* and *tapaścaryā* (self-abnegation and penance)[187] which ran like a thread through the life of a Hindu which were in the main responsible for the tenacity or stability of the race and saved it from the tragic fate of other ancient and renowned nations of the world, who after a period of unprecedented prosperity sank into utter oblivion. The grand idea underlying the four Āśramas is worth a revival in a form suitable to the modern conditions of life.

The Āśrama system was meant only for the upper three enlightened classes and not for the Śūdras. These Āśramas were perfectly adapted to ancient Hindu life and every faculty, desire and aspiration of their nature was thereby fully exercised and satisfied.

DRESS

Dress and ornaments are the distinguishing characteristics of mankind as distinguished from the rest of the animal creation. A wild horse full of the measureless vitality

185. *Śākuntala* II. 14 : रक्षायोगादयमपि तपः प्रत्यहं संचिनोति ।

186. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 7 : प्रजायै गृहमेधिनाम् ।

187. ,, I. 7 : त्यागाय संभृतार्थानाम् ।

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characteristic of the tractless jungle, disdains the silver and gold trammels and trinkets with which his domesticated brother is decorated to satisfy the vanity of his master. So also a real artist will appreciate the sight of a really beautiful and well-proportioned woman in her nature's garb. The cult of nudity among the Greeks had its origin in the craving of a genuine artistic temperament. The hero in king Harṣa's *Nāgānanda* aptly blames his lady love for encumbering her body with clothes and trinkets and says, "Thou art sufficiently adorned by the inherent beauty of thy matchless limbs ; why then torment thyself with this needless decoration ?"[188] Kālidāsa in *Śākuntala* describing the resplendent and matchless splendour of Śakuntalā's body remarks, "Why bother about what she wears and how she wears it ? Beauty like hers is dominant and outstanding and what article of dress or decoration is there which does not enhance such beauty ?"[189] In *Raghuvaṁśa* Canto XVI king Kuśa describing the disordered and dishevelled dresses of his ladies owing to unrestrained water-sports in the Śarayū river remarks that they looked more fascinating on that account.[190] It is the body beautiful therefore which is mainly instrumental in captivating the eye, and dress and ornaments are merely accessories and helps which may show the natural charms to advantage or may even mar the same if their use is indiscreet and carried to excess. The ladies of Kashmir are noted for the colour of their skin and the regularity of their features, but they, at any rate those among them who are poor, by their mode of dress and decoration have done their utmost to spoil their natural beauty. It will be readily conceded that there are interesting situations when real physical charms cannot be appreciated and enjoyed until the entire dress and most of the ornaments are thrown aside.

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188. *Nāgānanda* Act III, p. 50 :
स्वाङ्गैरेव विभूषितासि वहसि क्लेशाय किं मण्डनम् ।

189. *Śākuntala* I. 17 : किमिव हि मधुराणां मण्डनं नाकृतीनाम् ।

190. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 17.

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The essential relation between the body and dress was fully known to the ancient Indians and overclothing was unknown at any rate in the case of the male. The body beautiful was only partially covered and the magnificent male form was fully exposed to view. The male dress consisted of a pair of garments (दुकूलयुग्म).[191] Robes and waistcoats were then unknown and man as a rule was independent of tailor-made clothes. Aja at the time of his marriage with Indumatī was thus presented with a couple of garments. The Romans and Greeks of old also covered only a part of their body. Even the male used to decorate the exposed portions of his body with various ornaments. The neck was adorned with strings of pearls,[192] the arms with अङ्गद्s or केयूरs—jewelled armlets, the fingers with rings, the head with किरीट[193], a golden diadem, in the case of kings, उष्णीष[194] i.e. शिरोवेष्टन or other ornamental covering for the head[195], ears with कुण्डलs or earrings[196], the wrists with वलयs or मणिबन्धs (wristlets)[197]. The God Viṣṇu's uncovered chest is said to be adorned with the matchless Kaustubha jewel[198]. Kuśa always wore the auspicious armlet given to Rāma by the sage Agastya.[199] All the above ornaments could not be worn if the parts of the body for which they were meant were not left exposed to view. Robes however were not unknown. The *Kañcukin* or the Chamberlain of the harem, wore a robe (कञ्चुक) as the insignia of his office together with a golden staff.[200] Even

191. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 18 :
भोजोपनीतं च दुकूलयुग्मं जग्राह सार्धं वनिताकटाक्षैः ।
192. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 60 : पाण्ड्योऽयमंसार्पितलम्बहारः ।
193. " I. 42.
Kumārasambhava XII. 29.
194. " XV. 3.
Raghuvaṁśa VIII. 12 : शिरसा वेष्टनशोभिना सुतः ।
195. " XVIII. 44 : निर्वृत्तजाम्बूनदपट्टशोभे ।
196 *Kumārasambhava* XII. 13.
197. *Śākuntala* III. 10.
198. *Raghuvaṁśa* X. 10.
199. " XVI. 72.
200. *Śākuntala* V. 3.

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in the description of the coronation ceremony of Atithi in Canto XVII of *Raghuvaṁśa* there is no reference to any robe or other tailored garment. On auspicious occasions the male garments were stamped or coloured with the pictures of the swans.[201]

There were dresses suitable for every occasion.[202] The coronation make-up is described in detail in Canto XVII of *Raghuvaṁśa*. There were expert decorators (प्रसाधक) whose services were requisitioned on special occasions such as marriage or coronation.[203] The hair of the prince about to be crowned was tied in a prescribed manner and interwoven with pearls and precious stones[204], he was thereafter besmeared with fragrant unguents, decorated with ornaments and dressed in garments imprinted with the figures of swans. Those proceeding on a hunting expedition also put on an appropriate dress[205] and tied their long flowing hair with wreaths of wild flowers.[206] There was also a suitable make-up for young princes studying archery[207] as well as for a यजमान performing a sacrifice who was equipped with the skin of the black deer to cover the upper part of his body and supplied with a staff of the औदुम्बर tree, the pointed horn of a deer to scratch his body, and a girdle of the Kuśa grass.[208] Similarly there was a dress appropriate to a girl celebrating her Svayaṁ-

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201. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 25.

202. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 5 : यदि नेपथ्यविधानमवसितम्, इतस्तावदागम्यताम्।

203. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 22 : आकल्पसाधनैस्तैस्तैरुपसेदुः प्रसाधकाः।

„ V. 76 : कुशलविरचितानुकूलवेषः।

204. „ XVII. 23.

205. „ IX. 50 : मृगवनोपगमक्षमवेषभृत्।

206. „ IX. 51 : ग्रथितमौलिरसौ वनमालया।

„ II. 8.

207. „ III. 31 :
त्वचं स मेध्यां परिधाय रौरवीमशिक्षतास्त्रं पितुरेव मन्त्रवत्।

208. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 21 :
अजिनदण्डभृतं कुशमेखलां यतगिरं मृगशृङ्गपरिग्रहाम्।

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vara, as well as one designed for the aspirants of her hand.[209] A dress appropriate for sexual congress is also referred to in *Ṛtusaṁhāra*.[210] In *Meghadūta* there is a reference to the अभिसारिकावेष.[211] The अभिसारिकाs put on Mandāra flowers in their hair and various leaves and lotus buds in their ears, beautifying their hair with the pearl gauze[212] and their necks with pearl necklaces. In the privacy of the inner apartments, young women used to cover the lower portion of their body with a fine gauze made of seed pearls especially in the hot season.[213] It appears that the bride wore garments not long enough to touch her heels and was decked for the occasion with many ornaments.[214] So also the silk garment worn by the bride was arranged so as to conceal the navel.[215] The dress appropriate for entering the holy precincts of the penance grove was ordained to be simple and unostentatious.[216]

In the case of ladies tailor-made garments like कञ्चुक or कूर्पासक (bodice)[217] appear to be in use. In the case of widows, religious nuns (Parivrājikās) or even maidens the use of कूर्पासक was not considered necessary. Maidens residing in hermitages also did not use this article of dress.

209. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 10.
" V. 76 :
कुशलविरचितानुकूलवेषः क्षितिपसमाजमगात्स्वयंवरस्थम् ।

210. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* V. 14 :
सुरतसमयवेशं नैशमाशु प्रहाय दधति दिवसयोग्यं वेषमन्यास्तरुण्यः ।

211. *Meghadūta* II. 9.

212. " II. 33 : मुक्ताजालं चिरपरिचितं त्याजितो दैवगत्या ।

213. " I. 63.

214. *Mālavikāgnimitra* V. 7 :
क्षनतिलम्बिदुकूलनिवासिनी बहुभिराभरणैः प्रतिभाति मे ।

215. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 7 :
निर्नाभि कौशेयमुपात्तबाणमभ्यङ्गनेपथ्यमलंचकार । (निर्नाभि = अतिक्रान्तनाभि ।)

216. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 24 :
विनीतवेषेण प्रवेष्टव्यानि तपोवनानि नाम ।

217. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* IV. 16 : कूर्पासकं परिदधाति नखक्षताङ्गी ।
" V. 8 : मनोज्ञकूर्पासकपीडितस्तनाः ।

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Śakuntalā appears to have covered her breasts by means of a portion of the वल्कल (bark garment) which was firmly tied by knots on her shoulder blade.[218] A Bauddha *bhikṣu* also used to arrange his upper garment so as to cover part of his chest by tying it up at the upper end.[219] कूर्पासक्स were of various modes and sizes. Some covered the entire breasts and some were so fashioned as to leave temptingly exposed to view some part of the breasts. A very interesting verse may be referred to in this connection.[220] Translated it runs as follows: "The meaning of words must not be too open and exposed (i.e. too easy to understand or to be seen) like the breasts of an Āndhra woman nor too tightly closed up (i.e. too difficult to understand or to be seen) like the breasts of a Gurjara woman. Language becomes impressive and appealing when partly open and partly concealed like the breasts of a Maratha woman." The size and fashion of the कूर्पासक it appears varied in different parts of India and the best specimen from the aesthetic point of view was and is even today that in vogue in Maharashtra. The above well-merited compliment to the female attire of Maharashtra may put one in mind of the marked predilection and partiality of king Harṣa of Kashmir who flourished towards the end of the 11th century for the dress of Maratha (दाक्षिणात्य) ladies.[221]

Silk garments (कौशेयवस्त्रs) were commonly used among the rich people. For marriage and similar auspicious occasions

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218. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 28 : अतिपिनद्धेन वल्कलेन प्रियंवदया नियन्त्रितास्मि । *Śākuntala :*

इदमुपहितसूक्ष्मग्रन्थिना स्कन्धदेशे स्तनयुगपरिणाहाच्छादिना वल्कलेन ।

219. *Mṛcchakaṭika* VIII. 5.

220. नो गुर्जरीस्तन इवातितरां निगूढो नान्ध्रीपयोधर इवातितरां प्रकाशः ।
अर्थो गिरामपिहितः पिहितश्च कश्चित् सौभाग्यमेति मरहट्टवधूकुचाभः ॥

221. *Rājataraṅgiṇī* VII. 928-933. Translation by Stein.

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such garments were specially used.[222] China silk cloth was also in use.[223] पत्रोर्ण[224] was a garment of mixed wool and silk often interwoven with figures of leaves or flowers (somewhat like a modern Kashmir shawl). Cotton garments were used by all people rich and poor and these were sometimes fashioned so thin and light that even a soft breath could waft away and displace them.[225]

It is curious that Indians both male and female under certain conditions used bark garments to cover their bodies; these barks must have been of an unusually fine texture and flexibility so that as Duṣyanta observes Śakuntalā actually appeared strikingly beautiful covered with such bark garment.[226] These were used by ascetics and foresters who had no time to devote to spinning and weaving. There are many references to bark garments in Kālidāsa's writings.[227] It may be worth while discovering the tree whose bounty supplied a number of poor people with cheap and simple vestments.

The style of dress of the Indian woman in point of aesthetic beauty, convenience and decency is almost matchless in the whole world. The entire body is most artistically covered, with sufficient display of the beautiful lines

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222. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 7 :
निर्नाभि कौशेयमुपात्तबाणमभ्यङ्गनेपथ्यमलंचकार ।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act V, p. 105 : कौशेयपत्रोर्णयुगलमुपनय ।

223. *Śākuntala* I. 30 : चीनांशुकमिव केतोः प्रतिवातं नीयमानस्य ।
Kumārasambhava VII. 3 : चीनांशुकैः कल्पितकेतुमालम् ।

224. *Mālavikāgnimitra* V. 12 : स्नानीयवस्त्रक्रियया पत्रोर्णं वोपयुज्यते ।

225. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 43 : निःश्वासहार्यांशुकम् ।

226. *Śākuntala* I. 17 : इयमधिकमनोज्ञा वल्कलेनापि तन्वी ।

227. ,, I. 13 : तोयाधारपथाश्च वल्कलशिखानिष्यन्दरेखाङ्किताः ।
,, I. 28 : विटपविषक्तजलार्द्रवल्कलेषु ।
,, VI. 17 : शाखालम्बितवल्कलस्य च तरोर्निर्मातुमिच्छाम्यधः ।
Raghuvaṁśa XIV. 82 :
वन्येन सा वल्कलिनी शरीरं पत्युः प्रजासंततये बभार ।
Kumārasambhava V. 8 : बबन्ध बालारुणबभ्रु वल्कलम् ।

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of the female form, by one piece of cloth generally six yards to nine yards in length. It is held together with one strong knot near the navel called नीवि which owing to its strategic position has attained great importance in Sanskrit erotic literature.[228] In the Maratha country the garment used as a rule is about nine yards as the mode of putting it on is somewhat different. The poet Kalhaṇa, the author of *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, minutely describes the fashions of Deccan females as follows: "They wore their hair in long braids with golden Ketaka-leaf ornaments braided into them and with bows of strings woven with gold festoons at the end of the plaits. They wore ornamental pendents on the forehead over the hair, no veil was worn and the long tail-ends of the lower garments kissed the ground. Their breasts were tightly confined in bodices which covered half the length of their beautiful arms." Except in the Deccan the lower part of the body was usually dressed in a skirt (Mar. परकर). In the Deccan also the skirt is usually worn by girls below a certain age. Whether in Kālidāsa's time skirts were used by grown-up ladies to cover the lower part of their bodies cannot be definitely ascertained.

In the hot season[229] as well as in advanced pregnancy[230] women wore thin garments and only a few ornaments, so also when they were व्रतस्थ (observing a vow).[231]

It appears that persons riding in rapidly moving vehicles such as a रथ (chariot) used to tie up a thin cloth

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228. *Śṛṅgāratilaka* 24 :

मम तु मतमनङ्गस्मेरतारुण्यघूर्णन्मदकलमदिराक्षीनीविमोक्षो हि मोक्षः।

Raghuvaṁśa XIX. 41 : जहुराग्रथनमोक्षलोलुपम्। (आग्रथन = नीवि)

Meghadūta II. 5 : नीवीबन्धोच्छ्वसितशिथिलं यत्र बिम्बाधराणाम्।

229. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* I. 7 :

समुद्वतस्वेदचितासङ्गसन्धयो विमुच्य वासांसि गुरूणि सांप्रतम्।
स्तनेषु तन्वंशुकमुन्नतस्तना निवेशयन्ति प्रमदाः सयौवनाः।

230. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 2 : शरीरसादादसमग्रभूषणा।

231. *Vikramorvaśīya* III. 12 : सितांशुका मङ्गलमात्रभूषणा।

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round their hair to keep off the dust.[232]

Besides the garments covering the body the ladies used a thin bright-coloured cloth for covering their breasts.[233]

The aborigines were ignorant of the art of spinning and weaving. They were, however, attracted by the fine cotton and silk garments used by their Aryan invaders. They therefore filched the fine white cloth with which dead bodies of the Aryans taken to burning ground were covered and used it for themselves.[234] The aborigines possibly covered themselves in a meagre way by using skins of animals which they killed for their food. Tāḍakā is mentioned as wearing a girdle (मेखला) fashioned from the entrails of human beings whom she had killed.[235] There is no reference anywhere about the Rākṣasas wearing bark garments. Foresters used to wear peacock feathers for the purpose of decoration as well as for partially covering their bodies.[236]

The monkey chiefs who accompanied Rāma to Ayodhyā must have retained the peculiar dress of their community. When Rāma marched into the city of Ayodhyā after his return from Laṅkā, the monkey chiefs who were honoured by being mounted on the elephants were dressed after the civilized or Aryan fashion (मनुष्यवपुः).[237]

ORNAMENTS

The ornaments used by the womanhood of a country or community are a sure index to the level of their aesthetic taste and culture. Applying this test, it will have to be

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232. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 42 : रजोभिस्तुरगोत्कीर्णैरस्पृष्टालकवेष्टनौ ।

233. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 17 :
च्युतं रुधा भिन्नगतेरसंशयं शुकोदरश्यामिदं स्तनांशुकम् ।

234. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 16 : प्रेतचीवरवसा ।

235. „ XI. 17.

236. *Mālavikāgnimitra* V. 10 : आकर्णलम्बिशिखिपिच्छकलापधारी ।

237. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 74 :
रामाज्ञया हरिचमूपतयस्तदानीं कृत्वा मनुष्यवपुरारुरुहुर्गजेन्द्रान् ।

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conceded that the dress and ornamentation used by the women in Kālidāsa's time were unexceptionable and unrivalled in their simplicity, elegance and effectiveness.

Beginning from the feet upward, it may be convenient to refer to the नूपुर or the anklet. This was an ornament for the portion of the leg immediately above the foot which is known as the ankle. It is usually fashioned of silver, but when it was meant to adorn the feet of the queen or a princess, it was made of pure gold. The sweet jingling sound made by the feet of a young woman adorned with नूपुर has been frequently described by Sanskrit poets with a truly loving touch.[238] In *Mṛcchakaṭika* the विट (the learned counsellor in affairs of the heart) brings to the notice of the fugitive Vasantasenā that the sound of her anklets betrayed her whereabouts.[239] The Aśoka tree is supposed to put forth its full floral wealth when it is struck with the foot of a beautiful young damsel adorned with नूपुर. All the above references indicate the importance of नूपुर in the decorative equipment of the Indian womanhood.

The next ornament in order of succession, is the girdle (मेखला or काञ्ची). मेखला or काञ्ची serves several purposes. The ornament being made of gold inset with precious stones with small bells attached to it at the lower end, is a beautiful article of decoration. It is lightly fastened and adjusted round about the नीवि, the main knot of the garment, covering the female form, and holds the garment

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238. *Vikramorvaśīya* III. 15 : गूढं नूपुरशब्दमात्रमपि मे कान्ता श्रुतौ पातयेत्।
Mālavikāgnimitra III. 17 :
अनेन तनुमध्यया मुखरनूपुराराविणा नवाम्बुरुहकोमलेन चरणेन संभावितः।
Mālavikāgnimitra IV. 3 : अनुचितनूपुरविरहं नार्हसि तपनीयपीठकालम्बि।
Ṛtusaṁhāra IV. 4 : न नूपुरैर्हंसरुतं भजद्भिः।
„ III. 20 : पादाम्बुजानि कलनूपुरशेखरैश्च।
„ I. 5 : नितम्बिनीनां चरणैः सनूपुरैः पदे पदे हंसरुतानुकारिभिः।
Raghuvaṁśa VIII. 63 : स्मरतेव सशब्दनूपुरं चरणानुग्रहमन्यदुर्लभम्।
„ XIII. 23 :
सैषा स्थली यत्र विचिन्वतां त्वां भ्रष्टं मया नूपुरमेकमुर्व्याम् (अदृश्यत)।

239. *Mṛcchakaṭika* I. 35.

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from slipping down or being dislocated. A lover if he is disposed to make intimate inroads on the modesty of his ladylove has first to grapple with and remove the काञ्ची which so to say is the guardian of a woman's modesty or chastity. Being placed on a conspicuous and strategic part of the body, it dazzles the eye with its beauty and brilliance. In rare instances it may be used by an incensed woman to strike her perfidious lover as Irāvatī does in Act III of *Mālavikāgnimitra*.[240] काञ्ची (रशना or मेखला) was a very favourite ornament of Indian womanhood of those days and innumerable references to it are found in Sanskrit literature.[241] A lady's full-sized (well-developed) hind parts (buttocks) are described as the seat of the girdle (काञ्चीगुणस्थानम्).[242] The मेखला was sometimes used as a rope by incensed ladies to tie up their recalcitrant lovers.[243] The रशना or girdle was sometimes fashioned by stringing jewels in a thread.[244] The lover's first difficulty in the case of a shy reluctant mate is to untie her मेखला[245]. When the sexual congress is violent and merciless, the string of the मेखला gets snapped and the jewels scatter all over the bed.[246] The girdle is said to be the witness to the first union

240. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act III, p. 59.

241. *Kumārasambhava* I. 37 : काञ्चीगुणस्थानमनिन्दितायाः।
Raghuvaṁśa XIX. 26 : मेखलागुणपदैः।

242. *Kumārasambhava* III. 55 :
स्रस्तां नितम्बादवलम्बमाना पुनः पुनः केसरदामकाञ्चीम्।

243. *Kumārasambhava* IV. 8 :
स्मरसि स्मर! मेखलागुणैरुत गोत्रस्खलितेषु बन्धनम्।
Kumārasambhava V. 10.

244. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 61 :
कस्याश्चिदासीद्रशना तदानीमङ्गुष्ठमूलार्पितसूत्रशेषा।

245. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 14 :
मेखलाप्रणयलोलतां गतं हस्तमस्य शिथिलं रुरोध सा।
Raghuvaṁśa XIX. 27 : हस्तरोधि रशनाविघट्टने।

246. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 83 : तस्य तच्छिदुरमेखलागुणं पार्वतीरतम्।
Raghuvaṁśa XIX. 25 : छिन्नमेखलम्।
Kumārasambhava IX. 25.

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between the lovers.[247] A girdle is sometimes made of flowers, especially of Bakula flowers which last for a long time.[248] A row of birds hovering either over a tank or a river is often compared by the poet to its loosened girdle.[249] The poet styles the river Śarayū as हंसमेखला. The girdle being uncomfortaly cold and hard of touch was covered by Lakṣmī with her garment when she was shampooing the feet of her lord placed on her lap.[250] The girdle of Tāḍakā was fashioned from the entrails of human beings killed by her.[251] The earth is called रत्नाकरमेखला i.e. a woman who is engirdled by the ocean.[252] The girdles of the ladies of the harem of Kuśa ceased to emit the usual sweet jingling sound, the interstices between their jewels having been filled with water when sporting in the Śarayū river.[253] The girdle of Irāvatī slipping down from its place and obstructing her gait is fancied by the king as pleading for him and persuading her not to leave him in anger.[254]

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247. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 58 : इयमप्रतिबोधशायिनीं रशना त्वां प्रथमा रहःसखी।
248. ,, VIII. 64 :
तव निःश्वसितानुकारिभिर्बकुलैरर्धचितां समं मया (विलासमेखलां)।
249. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 37 :
शुशुभिरे स्मितचारुतराननाः स्त्रिय इव श्लथशिञ्जितमेखलाः।
विकचतामरसा गृहदीर्घिका मदकलोदकलोलविहंगमाः।
250. *Raghuvaṁśa* X. 8 : क्षौमान्तरितमेखले अङ्के।
251. ,, XI. 17 : श्रोणिलम्बिपुरुषान्त्रमेखलाम्।
252. ,, XV. 1 : रत्नाकरमेखलां पृथिवीम्।
253. ,, XVI. 65 : अमी जलापूरितसूत्रमार्गा मौनं भजन्ते रशनाकलापाः।
,, XIX. 41.
254. *Mālavikāgnimitra* III. 20 :
चरणपतितया न चण्डि तां विसृजसि मेखलयापि याचिता।
Mālavikāgnimitra IV. 15 : रुणद्धि रशनाव्यापारलोलाङ्गुलीः।
Ṛtusaṁhāra I. 4 : नितम्बविम्बैः सदुकूलमेखलैः।
,, I. 6 : नितम्बबिम्बाश्च सहेममेखलाः।
,, II. 19 : स्त्रियश्च काञ्चीमणिकुण्डलोज्ज्वलाः।
,, III. 20 : श्रोणीतटं सुविपुलं रसनाकलापैः।
,, IV. 4 : काञ्चीगुणैः काञ्चनरत्नचित्रैः।
,, VI. 24 : आलम्बिहेमरसनाः।

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In *Vikramorvaśīya* the poet compares the turbulent monsoon-fed river to Urvaśī and fancies the row of excited birds hovering over her as her loosened girdle.[255] The same idea occurs in *Meghadūta* I. 28 in connection with the river निर्विन्ध्या.[256] The girdles of the dancing girls of the Mahākāla temple are said to have become noisy owing to their dancing movements.[257]

The innumerable references to काञ्ची, मेखला, रशना in Kālidāsa show that the ornament was in great favour at the time. It is still in vogue especially in Southern India. The sweet jingling sound made by Nūpuras and Kañcī due to the sportive movements of young girls have a fascination all its own to the ears of the ardent and passionate lover.

The next important ornament is the हार or the necklace. Pearl necklaces were most in favour. Ekāvalī was a necklace wherein jewels of all kinds were stringed together.[258] A neck-collar made of blue stones (नीलमाणिक्यमयी कण्ठिका) is referred to in *Kumārasambhava*.[259] तारहार was a necklace made of big round pearls.[260] Necklaces of pearls and jewels, as well as collars both of pearls and jewels, are still in fashion. This was an ornament common to both the sexes at that time.

Another ornament common to both the sexes was वलय (bracelet). Perhaps it was more favoured by the male.[261] In the case of the weaker sex its place was taken by the कङ्कण[262] (which also was known by the name of वलय).

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255. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 52 : क्षुभितविहगश्रेणिरशना ।

256. *Meghaduta* I. 28 : वीचिक्षोभस्तनितविहगश्रेणिकाञ्चीगुणायाः ।

257. *Meghadūta* I. 35 : पादन्यासैः क्वणितरशनाः ।

258. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act I, p. 23.

259. *Kumārasambhava* XII. 14.

260. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 20 : हारैः सचन्दनरसैः स्तनमण्डलानि ।

Meghadūta I. 31A : हारांस्तारांस्तरलगुटिकान्कोटिशः शङ्खशुक्तीः ।

261. *Śākuntala* III. 10 : कनकवलयं स्रस्तं स्रस्तं मया प्रतिसार्यते ।

262. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 21 :
आमुञ्चतीवाभरणं द्वितीयमुद्भिन्नविद्युद्वलयो घनस्ते ।

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The word is used in *Uttararāmacarita*.[263] But in this case it may be perhaps लग्नकङ्कण i.e. circlet put round the hand of the bride. The glass bangles which are now regarded as auspicious and a necessary insignia of a newly-married bride appear conspicuous by their absence in ancient Sanskrit literature.

The केयूर[264] or अङ्गद i.e. armlet was another ornament patronized by both the sexes.[265] These ornaments were made of gold inset with valuable jewels. केयूर was a favourite ornament with males also.[266]

कर्णपूर[267] or कुण्डल or ताटङ्क were ear-ornaments also common to both the sexes. Even today in some parts of India men are seen using these ornaments. In *Kumārasambhava*, Śaṅkara is described as using कुण्डलs set with jewels as resplendent as the sun and the moon.[268] These ear-ornaments, as at present, appear to have been of various designs according to the taste and means of the wearer.

Cūḍāmaṇi was an ornament whereby a resplendent jewel was hung very probably in the middle of the forehead. This appears to be a part of the decoration of a bridegroom.[269] In the case of the bride also similar trinket was in use which is still in vogue known as Bindī (Mar.).

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263. *Uttararāmacarita* III. 41 : गृहीतो यः पूर्वं परिणयविधौ कंकणधरः ।

264. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 56 : अन्योन्यकेयूरविघट्टिनीभिः ।
Kumārasambhava VII. 69 :
केयूरचूर्णीकृतलाजमुष्टिं हिमालयस्यालयमाससाद ।

265. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 6 : भुजेषु सङ्गं वलयाङ्गदानि ।
„ IV. 3 : न प्रयान्ति सङ्गं वलयाङ्गदानि ।

266. *Bhartṛhari* : केयूरा न विभूषयन्ति पुरुषं हारा न चन्द्रोज्ज्वलाः ।

267. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* II. 24 : विकचनवकदम्बैः कर्णपूरं वधूनां (रचयति) ।
„ III. 19 : कर्णेषु च प्रवरकाञ्चनकुड्मलेषु ।

268. *Kumārasambhava* XII. 13 :
कर्णस्थिताभ्यां शशिभास्कराभ्यामुपासितं कुण्डलयोश्छलेन ।
Ṛtusaṁhāra II. 19 : स्त्रियश्च काञ्चीमणिकुण्डलोज्ज्वलाः ।

269. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 35 :
चन्द्रेण नित्यं प्रतिभिन्नमौलेश्चूडामणेः किं ग्रहणं हरस्य ।

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The ladies used to wear a net or gauze of seed pearls for their hair both as an ornament and to keep their tresses in order.[270]

There is no reference to a nose-ring anywhere in ancient Sanskrit literature including Kālidāsa's works. It appears that the ornament was in vogue among the Dravidians or other aboriginal tribes and was borrowed from them by some of the Aryan inhabitants. In some places the nose is bored on both the sides and a couple of rings or studs are worn. The use of nose rings and studs is gradually getting out of fashion in the upper classes of Hindu society. Mudrikās or rings worn on fingers of the hand were in vogue. In the plot of *Śākuntala* the ring figures very conspicuously. So also in *Mālavikāgnimitra* the *sarpamudrikā*, serpent-shaped ring, plays an important part.

There was a peculiar custom of exchanging garments (उत्तरीय) between dear and intimate friends and relations with a view to show great respect and affection for one another.[271] In recent times the custom took the form of exchanging turbans and head-dresses (Mar. पगडभाई) and prevailed even among Mahomedans. Among Rajputs it was much in vogue.

It appears that dancers used to wear scant garments so that the symmetry of their bodies may be easily seen and appreciated.[272] Even at present dancers and acrobats wear scanty clothes. The ascetics used the sticky oily juice of the Iṅgudī fruit to anoint their hair.[273]

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270. *Meghadūta* I. 63 : मुक्ताजालग्रथितमलकं कामिनीवाभ्रवृन्दम् ।
„ II. 9 : मुक्ताजालैः स्तनपरिसरच्छिन्नसूत्रैश्च हारैः ।

271. *Kumārasambhava* XIII. 18 :
तस्योत्तरीयेण निजाम्बरेण निरुञ्छनं चारु चकार शक्रः ।
Kumārasambhava XIII. 21.

272. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act I, p. 22 :
सर्वाङ्गसौष्ठवाभिव्यक्तये विगतनेपथ्ययोः पात्रयोः प्रवेशोऽस्तु ।

273. *Śākuntala* I. 13 :
प्रस्निग्धाः क्वचिदिङ्गुदीफलभिदः सूच्यन्त एवोपलाः ।

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PURDAH

The custom of Purdah as it exists among the Mahomedans was unknown in ancient India. When, however, young women were called to attend before large assemblies or before a multitude of strangers, they partially covered their faces. Thus when Śakuntalā had to visit king Duṣyanta sitting in open court she partially covered her face.[274] Ordinarily women moved freely in society without any pretence of purdah. In Act I of *Śākuntala* although Duṣyanta was a perfect stranger, Śakuntalā and her friends welcomed and entertained him with a freedom and cordiality befitting the modern society girls of the present so-called advanced times. Śakuntalā was commissioned by the absent Kaṇva, in preference to the elderly male ascetics of the hermitage such as Śārṅgarava or Śāradvata, to receive and entertain guests, which shows what a position of honour and confidence women enjoyed in society.[275] The monkey and Rākṣasa chiefs who were of incalculable help to Rāma in times of difficulty were worshipped by Sītā herself when they were given an affectionate send-off from Ayodhyā.[276] Indumatī appeared before a multitude of princes assembled in Sāketa for her Svayaṁvara without even a partial covering of her face. Sītā appeared before the vast assemblage of the citizens of Ayodhyā, when called upon to prove her chastity for the second time, without any purdah or covering of the face.[277] Pārvatī was present at the interview between the seven sages and her father Himālaya when negotiations for her marriage with Śaṅkara

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274. *Śākuntala* V. 13 : कास्विदवगुण्ठनवती नातिपरिस्फुटशरीरलावण्या ।
,, Act V, p. 168 :
जाते, मुहूर्तं मा लज्जस्व । अपनेष्यामि तावत्तेऽवगुण्ठनम् ।

275. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 22 : दुहितरं शकुन्तलामतिथिसत्काराय नियुज्य दैवमस्याः प्रतिकूलं शमयितुं सोमतीर्थं गतः ।

276. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 19 :
सीतास्वहस्तोपहृताग्र्यपूजान्रक्षःकपीन्द्रान्विससर्ज रामः ।

277. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 77.

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were in progress.[278] In Act I of *Mālavikāgnimitra*, neither the queen Dhariṇī nor Parivrājikā who acted as arbitrator to decide upon the respective claims to superiority between the rival music teachers, thought of wearing a veil.

The words used for denoting harems and seraglios of kings and rich men, viz., शुद्धान्तः, अवरोध, अन्तःपुर, may lead to a mistaken belief that there was a complete and fanatical segregation of the family ladies from all contact with the outside world. Such does not appear to be the case. Intimate friends and near relations had no difficulty in getting access to the inner apartments on reasonable grounds. In Act V of *Śākuntala* the king requests his Brahmin friend Vidūṣaka to carry his message to queen Haṁsapadikā.[279] The harems of ancient Indian kings were not prison houses like the *janānkhanas* of the Mahomedans. It was inevitable that certain restraints should have been observed but they were consistent with the high regard shown to and the confidence reposed in ladies of high family.

CRAZE FOR FLOWERS

The craze for flower-ornaments was much more powerful in those days than even the love for gold and jewels. Kuśa is said to have regarded flowers and jewels as of equal value.[280] In his description of the celestial city of the Yakṣas (Alakā) the highest compliment the poet could bestow on the city was that flowers of all the seasons were available during all the days of the year.[281] The lotus is

278. *Kumārasambhava* VI. 84 :
एवंवादिनि देवर्षौ पार्श्वे पितुरधोमुखी ।
लीलाकमलपत्राणि गणयामास पार्वती ॥

289. *Śākuntala* Act V, p. 151 :
सखे माढव्य, मद्वचनादुच्यतां हंसपदिका ।

280. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 74 : स तुल्यपुष्पाभरणो हि धीरः ।

281. *Meghadūta* II. 2 :
हस्ते लीलाकमलमलके बालकुन्दानुविद्धं
नीता लोध्रप्रसवरजसा पाण्डुतामानने श्रीः ।
चूडापाशे नवकुरबकं चारु कर्णे शिरीषं
सीमन्ते च त्वदुपगमजं यत्र नीपं वधूनाम् ॥

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the peculiar product of the Śarad season (Āśvina and Kārtika). Kunda buds appear in Hemanta (Mārgaśīrṣa and Pauṣa) and Lodhra flower is available in winter only. Kurabaka is the hall-mark of the spring season (Vasanta), Śirīṣa of Grīṣma (Jyeṣṭha and Āṣādha), and Nīpa is the product of the monsoon, i.e. वर्षाकाल. The poet cannot conceive of a higher praise for the wonderful Alakā than making it the receptacle of the flowers of all seasons throughout the year.

Flowers and even leaves were put to various decorative uses. Large and small garlands were skilfully fashioned of many kinds of flowers. Large garlands which reached right up to the knees of the wearer were called Prālamba.[282] The bride about to elect her groom in the Svayaṁvara form of marriage always carried in her hand a large garland of Madhūka flowers interspersed with the holy Dūrvā grass.[283] The garlands of flowers peculiar to the prevailing season were articles of daily use in the case of both the sexes of the rich and well-to-do classes. Duṣyanta when he was gratefully entertained by Indra in return for his invaluable help in the fight with the Asuras, was most graciously favoured by the great god by investiture of the Mandāra garland which he himself was wearing.[284] The gay prince Agnivarṇa was fond of wearing flower garlands at all times. The poet fondly depicts him when engrossed in playing on the Puṣkara (drum), with the garland he was wearing, rolling and rocking in tune with his rhythmic movements.[285] In the rainy season the pleasure-loving prince adorned himself with a garland of Kuṭaja and

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282. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 14 :
प्रालम्बमुत्कृष्य यथावकाशं निनाय साचीकृतचारुवक्त्रः ।

283. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 25 : किंचिद्विस्रंसिदूर्वाङ्कमधूकमाला ।
„ VI. 84.

284. *Śākuntala* VII. 2 :
आमृष्टवक्षोहरिचन्दनाङ्का मन्दारमाला हरिणा पिनद्धा ।

285. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 14 :
स स्वयं प्रहतपुष्करः कृती लोलमाल्यवलयो हरन्मनः ।

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Arjuna flowers.[286] Ladies too were fond of wearing garlands[287], also of decorating their tresses with flowers and wreaths of flowers.[288]

Flowers like Śirīṣa, Kakubha, Kadamba, Nīlotpala and Karṇikāra were freely used as ear-ornaments.[289] In *Śākuntala* the hero after minutely scrutinizing the portrait of Śakuntalā painted by himself remarks, "Oh! I have forgotten to put on her ear a Śiriśa flower with its long sprouts touching her cheek, as also lotus filaments as delicate as the moonbeams between her breasts."[290] Flowers and delicate leaves behind the ear were called Avataṁsa, i.e. a pendent.[291]

Flowers, moreover, were used for making cool and comfortable beds to ease the body of an afflicted person.[292]

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286. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 37 : अंसलम्बिकुटजार्जुनस्रजः ।

287. *Vikramorvaśīya* I. 7 : मन्दारकुसुमदाम्ना गुरुरस्याः सूच्यते हृदयकम्पः ।

288. *Meghadūta* II. 2 : चूडापाशे नवकुरबकम् ।
Vikramorvaśīya IV. 22 : रतिविगलितबन्धे केशहस्ते सुकेश्याः ।
Ṛtusaṁhāra II. 20 :
मालाः कदम्बनवकेसरकेतकीभिरायोजिताः शिरसि बिभ्रति योषितोऽद्य ।
Ṛtusaṁhāra II. 18 : कृतावतंसैः कुसुमैः सुगन्धिभिः ।
Ṛtusaṁhāra III. 19 :
केशान्वितान्तघननीलविकुञ्चिताग्रानापूरयन्ति वनिता नवमालतीभिः ।
कर्णेषु च प्रवरकाञ्चनकुड्मलेषु नीलोत्पलानि विविधानि निवेशयन्ति ॥
Ṛtusaṁhāra II. 24 :
विकचनवकदम्बैः कर्णपूरं वधूनां रचयति जलदौघः कान्तवत्काल एषः ।

289. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* II. 18, 20, 24; IV. 19; VI. 5.

290. *Śākuntala* VI. 18.

291. ,, I. 4 : अवतंसयन्ति दयमानाः प्रमदाः शिरीषकुसुमानि ।
,, I. 26 : स्रस्तं कर्णशिरीषरोधि वदने घर्माम्भसां जालकम् ।

292. *Śākuntala* Act III, p. 88 :
एषा मे मनोरथप्रियतमा सकुसुमास्तरणं शिलापट्टमधिशयाना सखीभ्यामन्वास्यते ।
Śākuntala III. 23 : तस्याः पुष्पमयी शरीरलुलिता शय्या शिलायामियम् ।
Vikramorvaśīya II. 12 :
कथं मम ललितपारिजातशयनीये भवन्ति नन्दनवनवाताप्युष्णकाः शरीरके ॥
Raghuvaṁśa XIX. 23: कुसुमशयनाल्लतागृहात् ।

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So also beds were prepared of tender leaves of some trees.[293]

Stalks of lotuses were used to make circlets for the hands of persons suffering from extreme heat or fever.[294] Lotus-leaves were used as fans.[295] Flowers like Bakula though dried do not lose their smell and therefore they were preserved for special occasion.[296]

Poor women who had no jewellery adorned themselves only with flowers fashioned into designs of various ornaments.[297] Even queens and rich people used to prepare imitation ornaments such as girdles from flowers.[298] Leaves of certain trees were also used for decorative purposes.[299]

Marble floors of rich peoples' dwellings and especially of dancing halls were strewn with a profusion of flowers.[300]

Flowers were used for worship of the family gods and for religious purposes as they are used even now.[301]

When an extremely meritorious act was performed by a mortal the gods signified their approval and praise by

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293. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 50 : मृदुप्रवालोत्तरपुष्पशय्ये (वृन्दावने) ।
Kumārasambhava IV. 35 :
कुसुमास्तरणे सहायतां बहुशः सौम्य ! गतस्त्वमावयोः ।

294. *Śākuntala* III. 6 : स्तनन्यस्तोशीरं शिथिलितमृणालैकवलयं (वपुः) ।

295. *Śākuntala* III. 18 :
किं शीतलैः क्लमविनोदिभिरार्द्रवातान्संचारयामि नलिनीदलतालवृन्तैः ।

296. *Śākuntala* Act IV, p. 127.

297. „ Act IV, p. 129 :
आभरणोचितं रूपमाश्रमसुलभैः प्रसाधनैर्विप्रकार्यते ।

298. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 64 :
बकुलैरर्धचितां समं मया असमाप्य विलासमेखलां (किं सुप्यते) ।

299. *Śākuntala* IV. 8 : नादत्ते प्रियमण्डनापि भवतां स्नेहेन या पल्लवम् ।
Mālavikāgnimitra III. 16 : आदाय कर्णकिसलयमस्मादियमत्र चरणमर्पयति ।

300. *Mālavikāgnimitra* II. 16 : पादाङ्गुष्ठालुलितकुसुमे कुट्टिमे पातिताक्षं ।
Meghadūta II. 3 : ज्योतिश्छायाकुसुमरचितानि (हर्म्यस्थलानि) ।

301. *Meghadūta* I. 43 : पुष्पासारैः स्नपयतु भवान्व्योमगङ्गाजलार्द्रैः ।
Raghuvaṁśa II. 1 : जायाप्रतिग्राहितगन्धमाल्याम् ।

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showering flowers from the skies.[302] When king Dilīpa was roaming the forest in attendance on Vasiṣṭha's divine cow he tied up his long hair with ropes of wild creepers.[303] When Daśaratha was on a hunting expedition, he tied his hair with wreaths of flowers.[304]

It may have been the fashion to hold in hand either a lotus or a fragrant flower when attending assemblies or functions.[305] Mogul emperors of India are portrayed as sitting on the throne with a rose flower in their hand.

Hindu marriage is never considered complete until there is mutual exchange of flower garlands between the wedding couple.[306]

The favourite recreation of a loving couple was to string garlands of flowers in various shapes.[307] Nails and certain parts of the hands and feet were coloured red by women as an aid to their beauty.[308]

The use of flowers for decorating the body has now gone out of vogue. On ceremonial occasions such as marriage, guests are presented with a bouquet. Honoured guests or the chairmen of public meetings are still honoured with a garland of flowers.

In Maharashtra women are fond of putting wreaths of

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302. *Raghuvaṁśa* II. 60 : अवाङ्मुखस्योपरि पुष्पवृष्टिः पपात विद्याधरहस्तमुक्ता।
„ XII. 102 : सुरभि सुरविमुक्तं पुष्पवर्षं पपात।
303. „ II. 8 : लताप्रतानोद्ग्रथितैः स केशैरधिज्यधन्वा विचचार दावम्।
304. „ IX. 51 : ग्रथितमौलिरसौ वनमालया।
305. „ VI. 13 : कश्चित्कराभ्यामुपगूढनालं ...लीलारविन्दं भ्रमयांचकार।
306. „ VI. 83 : सा चूर्णगौरं गुणं रघुनन्दनस्य ...कण्ठे...आसक्तयामास।
307. „ VIII. 64 : तव निःश्वसितानुकारिभिर्बकुलैरर्धचितां समं मया।
308. *Kumārasambhava* IV. 19 : तमिमं कुरु दक्षिणेतरं चरणं निर्मितरागमेहि मे।
„ V. 68 :
अलक्तकाङ्कानि पदानि पादयोर्विकीर्णकेशासु परेतभूमिषु।
Raghuvaṁśa XVI. 15 : निक्षिप्तवत्यश्चरणान्सरागान्।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act III, p. 50 :
सखि, एकस्य ते चरणस्यावसितो रागनिक्षेपः।
Meghadūta II. 11 : लाक्षारागं चरणकमलन्यासयोग्यम्।

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flowers in their braided hair which undoubtedly gives them a charming and distinctive appearance.

Face powders were used to soften and brighten the skin. The pollens of Lodhra flowers and the dust of the Ketaka were in vogue for this purpose.[309]

Even the Veeṇā (lute) of ascetics or singers was crowned with flower wreaths.[310] Owing to the great love of flowers it was inevitable that the art of horticulture should have been developed to a remarkable extent. Well laid extensive gardens, public as well as private, beautified every city. The gardens were called Upavanas or Udyānas. There are numerous references to such gardens in Kalidāsa's writings. These gardens, especially public gardens, were full of peacocks.[311] Kings and rich people resorted to public gardens situate on the outskirts of the city for pleasure and recreation.[312] When Daśaratha came to Mithilā to attend the marriage festival of Rāma at the invitation of Janaka his army devastated the trees of the gardens situate near the city. Mithilā, the poet remarks, joyfully put up with such ravages, as young women bear the prolonged and rough sexual usage given to them by their lovers.[313] Rāma, when he returned to Ayodhyā after a long exile, stayed for some time in the gardens adjoining the city.[314] These gardens therefore appear to have been very extensive and convenient for harbouring a large assemblage and even an army. No description of a city was complete without a reference to its gardens. Oṣadhi-

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309. *Meghadūta* II. 2 : नीता लोध्रप्रसवरजसा पाण्डुतामानने श्रीः ।
Raghuvaṁśa XIII. 16 : वेलानिलः केतकरेणुभिस्ते संभावयत्याननमायताक्षि ।

310. „ VIII. 34 : कुसुमैर्ग्रथितामपार्थिवैः स्रजमातोद्यशिरोनिवेशिताम् ।

311. „ VI. 9 : पुरोपकण्ठोपवनाश्रयाणां कलापिनामुद्धतनृत्यहेतौ ।

312. „ VIII. 32 :
नगरोपवने शचीसखो मरुतां पालयितेव नन्दने (विजहार) ।

313. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 52 :
आससाद मिथिलां स वेष्टयन्पीडितोपवनपादपां बलैः ।
प्रीतिरोधमसहिष्ट सा पुरी स्रोत्र कान्तपरिभोगमायतम् ॥

314. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 79 : साकेतोपवनमुदारमध्युवास ।

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prastha the capital city of the Himālaya was noted for its beautiful garden known by the name of Gandhamādana.[315] The Nandana garden of the gods with its divine Pārijāta trees and its Kalpavṛkṣa was universally known. Cūta, Aśoka, Kurabaka, Tilaka and other trees and creepers like Mādhavī, Yūthikā, Navamallikā and Priyaṅgu formed the principal ingredients of such gardens. So also Kokila, Sārasa, Haṁsa, Mayūra, Cakravāka, Sārikā were the chief birds whose presence and musical notes enlivened and enhanced their scenic and aesthetic beauty. The bees with their soporific humming music in their journey from flower to flower added a peaceful charm all its own to these haunts of pleasure-loving people.[316] Kokila (the cuckoo) especially in spring time figured conspicuously in the descriptions of these gardens.[317] The description of the Yakṣa's garden in Alakā given in *Meghadūta* II. 13-16 though hyperbolic enumerates some outstanding features of a private garden of the rich and prosperous.[318] There was a Vāpī or Dīrghikā, a well or pond, with highly ornamental borders and steps leading to the water and blooming lotuses with flamingoes sporting inside. There was also the mock or sport mountain (krīḍāśaila) whose flanks were covered by plantain trees and bowers covered by Mādhavī creeper. A golden pole was embedded in a marble slab for the peacock to rest thereon. These were some of the salient features of the Yakṣa's garden. The public gardens were generally on the banks of rivers as far as possible.[319]

315. *Kumārasambhava* VI. 46 : यस्य चोपवनं बाह्यं गन्धवद्गन्धमादनम् ।

316. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 29 : मधुलिहां मधुदानविशारदाः कुरबका रवकारणतां ययुः।

317. „ IX. 34 :
प्रथममन्यभृताभिरुदीरिताः प्रविरला इव सुग्धवधूकथाः (शुश्रुविरे) ।
Ṛtusaṁhāra VI. 27 :
समदमयुकराणां कोकिलानां च नादैः...तुदति कुसुममासो मन्मथोद्वेजनाय ॥

318. *Meghadūta* II. 13-16.

319. „ I. 26 :
विश्रान्तः सन्व्रज वननदीतीरजातानि सिञ्चन्
उद्यानानां नवजलकणैर्यूथिकाजालकानि ।

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Cool and restful bowers were the favourite resorts of lingering lovers.[320] The highly aesthetic-minded Indians of those days tried their utmost to render the gardens places of supreme beauty, colour, fragrance and peace. The sport mountains were a favourite resort from whose height the fascinating charm of the surrounding garden was easily observable. For the purpose of love intrigues the garden afforded ample scope and opportunities.[321] Sometimes large monkeys were kept in the garden for the amusement of visitors.[322] There were Udyānapālikās[323], i.e. guardians of the garden and Puṣpalāvīs[324] (flower girls). Much care was taken to water the trees at the proper time. For this purpose water channels or conduits (कुल्याः)[325] were devised whereby water from a distance was brought to the very foot of the trees where deep basins to store sufficient water were built.[326] So great was the affection for the plants that not only girls of foresters but even ladies of high standing did not think it derogatory to their dignity to water their favourite plants by means of suitable water pots (सेचनघट).[327] Sītā watered a Kadamba tree when

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320. *Śākuntala* Act III, p. 111 :
लतावलय संतापहारक, आमन्त्रये त्वां भूयोऽपि परिभोगाय ।
Śākuntala Act III, p. 112 : प्रियापरिभुक्ते लतावलये मुहूर्तं स्थास्यामि ।
Raghuvaṁśa XIX. 23 : कृत्तपुष्पशयनोल्लतागृहानेत्य दूतिकृतमार्गदर्शनः ।

321. Plot of *Mālavikāgnimitra.*

322. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act IV, p. 85 :
कुमारी वसुलक्ष्मीः कन्दुकमनुधावन्ती पिङ्गलवानरेण बलवत्त्रासिता न प्रकृतिं प्रतिपद्यते ।

323. *Śākuntala* VI. 193 : इत्थं च नौ प्रमदवनस्य पालनकर्म समर्पितम् ।

324. *Meghadūta* I. 26 : छायादानात्क्षणपरिचितः पुष्पलावीमुखानाम् ।

325. *Śākuntala* I. 13A : कुल्याम्भोभिः पवनचपलैः शाखिनो धौतमूलाः ।

326. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 6 : आधारबन्धप्रमुखैः प्रयत्नैः संवर्धितानां सुतनिर्विशेषम् ।

327. „ II. 36 :
यो हेमकुम्भस्तननिःसृतानां स्कन्दस्य मातुः पयसां रसज्ञः ।

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in exile with her husband.[328] Marriages of trees and creepers were celebrated with pomp and ceremonies.[329] A beautiful young creeper finding a suitable tree to climb over, was an occasion for rejoicing.[330] Gardens were usually supplied with swings (दोल).[331] In *Meghadūta*, Yakṣas are represented as resorting to public gardens to enjoy the pleasures of youth in company with courtezans.[332]

TAPOVANA

Tapovanas though possessing their own special charms were essentially different from the Upavanas. The former breathed a spirit of contentment, peace, benevolence, self-abnegation and religious fervour. The latter were haunts of pleasure, enjoyment and recreation. In the former, nature prevailed unrestrained in all its luxuriant wealth of vegetation and innocent animal life, while in the latter, art had the upper hand. Upavanas were located either in the heart of the city or on its outskirts. The Tapovanas have been described in detail and dealt with elsewhere.

PERFUMES

Next to flowers, the fondness of ancient Indians for varied perfumery—ointments, unguents, incense of many kinds—was well-known. The burning of incense at stated times in dwelling houses for fumigation was a recognized

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328. *Uttararāmacarita* III. 21 :
कतिपयकुसुमोद्गमः कदम्बः प्रियतमया परिवर्धितो य आसीत् ।

329. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 61 :
मिथुनं परिकल्पितं त्वया सहकारः फलिनी च नन्दिमौ ।
अविधाय विवाहसत्क्रियामनयोर्गम्यत इत्यसांप्रतम् ॥

330. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 31 :
रमणीये खलु काल एतस्य लतापादपमिथुनस्य व्यतिकरः संवृत्तः ।

331. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 46.

332. *Meghadūta* II. 8 :
वैभ्राजाख्यं विबुधवनितावारमुख्यासहाया
बद्धालापा बहिरुपवनं कामिनो निर्विशन्ति ।

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custom.[333] On auspicious occasions which were graced by an assemblage of esteemed persons, incense was burnt to purify and render fragrant the atmosphere.[334] The tresses of women especially after bath were dried and odorified by imparting incense to them—a custom which prevails even today in certain parts of India.[335]

Thus clothes were dried by smoking them with fragrance, so that they emitted a pleasant murmuring sound.[336]

Inner apartments were odorified by Kālāguru and other incense.[337]

On ceremonial occasions and in the hot season, it was customary to anoint the body with sandal paste.[338] The king of the Pāṇḍya country (South of India) is represented as attending Indumatī's Svayaṁvara with his body anointed with sandalwood paste.[339] The breasts of young ladies were anointed with sandalwood paste both for coolness and fragrance.[340] Sometimes sandalwood paste was mixed up with musk.

Aṅgarāga was a species of ointment applied to the body by ladies for preservation of the skin and to remove unsavoury bodily odour. Sītā was presented by the saintly Anasūya with a very fragrant and permanent unguent of this kind.[341]

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333. *Vikramorvaśīya* III. 2 : धूपैर्जालविनिःसृतैर्वलभयः संदिग्धपारावताः ।

334. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 8 : संचारिते चागुरुसारयोनौ धूपे समुत्सर्पति वैजयन्तीः ।

335. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 14 :
धूपोष्मणा त्याजितमार्द्रभावं केशान्तमन्तःकुसुमं तदीयम् ।

336. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 41 : मर्मरैरगुरुधूपगन्धिभिर्निवसनैः ।

337. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* V. 5 :
प्रकामकालागुरुधूपवासितं विशन्ति शय्यागृहमुत्सुकाः स्त्रियः ।

338. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 12 : आलिप्यते चन्दनमङ्गनाभिर्मदालसाभिर्मृगनाभियुक्तम् ।

339. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 60 : पाण्डयोऽयमंसार्पितलम्बहारः कृतासाङ्गरागो हरिचन्दनेन ।

340. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 48 : यस्यावरोधस्तनचन्दनानां प्रक्षालनाद्वारिविहारकाले ।
„ XIX. 45 : तं पयोधरनिषिक्तचन्दनैः (प्रियाः सिषेविरे) ।

341. „ XIV. 14 :
स्फुरत्प्रभामण्डलमानुसूयं सा बिभ्रती शाश्वतमङ्गरागम् ।

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It appears that white mustard was strewn over the body and garments on auspicious occasions.[342] It was also applied to the forehead of infants very probably for medicinal purposes.[343] Lodhra is a tree with red or white flowers. It appears that its powdered bark has the virtue of removing oiliness.[344] Kāleya is black sandalwood. The dry powder of Kāleya was used to give fragrance to the body. Aguru is aloe wood ; it appears to be of two kinds, black (Kṛṣṇāguru) and white (Śuklāguru). This wood is fragrant and its powder or paste must have been used to impart fragrance to the body.[345] Gorocanā is a bright yellow pigment prepared from the urine or bile of a cow or found in the head of a cow. On account of its bright yellow colour it was used to beautify the body with flower or leaf designs (पत्ररचना). Gorocanā is also applied to the body of females in order to beautify the colour of their skin.[346] मधूच्छिष्ट was a kind of wax created out of a beehive. This substance was used to remove artificial colouring from the skin and especially from the lips. Black collyrium (Kālāñjana)[347] was applied to the eyes as it coloured and beautified the same as well as preserved the sight.

Haritāla, a yellow pigment (some regard it as derived from हारित, a green pigeon), and Manaḥśilā (red arsenic), were mixed together for putting a mark on the forehead.[348]

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342. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 7 :
सा गौरसिद्धार्थनिवेशवद्भिर्दूर्वाप्रवालैः प्रतिभिन्नशोभम् (कौशेयम्)।
343. *Malatīmādhava* : शिखाललाटार्पितगौरसर्षपः ।
344. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 9 :
तां लोध्रकल्केन हृताङ्गतैलामाश्यानकालेयकृताङ्गरागाम् ।
345. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 15 :
विन्यस्तशुक्लागुरु चक्रुरङ्गं गोरोचनापत्रविभक्तमस्याः ।
346. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 17 : गोरोचनाक्षेपनितान्तगौरे (कपोले) ।
347. " VII. 20 :
न चक्षुषोः कान्तिविशेषबुद्ध्या कालाञ्जनं मङ्गलमित्युपात्तम् ।
348. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 23-24 :
हरितालमार्द्रं मनःशिलां चादाय...विवाहदीक्षातिलकं चकार ।

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Also flower or leaf designs (Patrāvalīs) were drawn on the body of the beloved person by using powdered wet musk as the material.[349]

Alaktaka, the red resin of certain trees or red lac or sap, was used by women to paint certain parts of their body, particularly their feet and their lips.[350] The custom is prevalent even to this day. Mendī (Mar.), as the juice of a certain plant is called, is still extensively used by young girls to dye the finger-nails of their hands or the soles of their feet. Coloured designs were painted on the body of an elephant also.[351]

The scents, essences, perfumery, lip-stick, face powders and other colouring of the present days is proof enough that the 'eternal feminine' is the same everywhere and at all times.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES AND CREMATIONS

There are some references to funeral obsequies. In Canto VIII of *Raghuvaṁśa* Aja performs the last rites of Indumatī.[352] The ministers of Agnivarṇa on his premature and tragic death secretly cremated him in the palace grounds. There is a passing reference to the cremation of Sumati, the minister of Mādhavasena.[353]

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349. *Kumārasambhava* IX. 22 :
कपोलपाल्यां मृगनाभिचित्रपत्रावलीमिन्दुमुखः सुमुख्याः ।

350. *Kumārasambhava* IX. 27 : अलक्तकं पादसरोरुहाग्रे संनिवेश्य ।
„ VII. 58 : अलक्तकाङ्कां पदवीं ततान ।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act III, p. 50 : अपि रोचते ते रागरेखाविन्यासः ।
Vikramorvaśīya IV, 16 :
पश्चान्नता गुरुनितम्बतया ततोऽस्या दृश्येत चारुपदपङ्क्तिरलक्तकाङ्का ।
Meghadūta II. 11 :
लाक्षारागं चरणकमलन्यासयोग्यं च यस्यामेकः सूते.....कल्पवृक्षः ।

351. *Meghadūta* I. 19 : भक्तिच्छेदैरिव विरचितां भूतिमङ्गे गजस्य ।

352. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 73 : विदुषा विधयो महर्द्धयः पुर एवोपवने समापिताः ।
„ XXIX. 54.

353. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act V, p. 99.

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In the case of a *saṁnyāsin* the ceremonies were अनग्नि (अग्निसंस्काररहित) i.e. he was buried.[354]

OFFERING OF PIṆDAS AND SPRINKLING OF SESAMUM WATER

The usual offering of Piṇḍa and Tilodaka are considered unnecessary in the case of a *saṁnyāsin*.[355]

The Hindu especially in ancient times put a great store on पिण्डदान and तिलोदकसिञ्चन i.e. offering to the dead of rice-balls and sprinkled water mixed with sesamum.[356] Hence the need of the birth of a son for that purpose. The Hindu sentiment about funeral obsequies and पिण्डदान has not undergone much change since the time of Kālidāsa and even now the same rites are performed with very little variation. The custom of burying the *saṁnyāsins* who are supposed to give up their vital spirit by yogic concentration, is still in existence. Jñāneśvara the saint and philosopher is said to have taken Samādhi, i.e. got himself buried alive at the age of twenty-four after writing his monumental and immortal works, viz., *Jñāneśvarī* and *Amṛtānubhava*.

PENANCE

Tapaścaryā or penance figured greatly in the life of the people. It mainly consisted in the mortification of the flesh. Man is supposed to be a composite of two main ingredients: the purely gross and material element (अपरा प्रकृति) which connects him with the brute animal creation, and the

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354. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 25 :
विदधे विधिमस्य नैष्ठिकं यतिभिः सार्धमनग्निमग्निचित् ।

355. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 26 : न हि तेन पथा तनुत्यजस्तनयावर्जितपिण्डकाङ्क्षिणः ।

356. *Śākuntala* VI. 25 :
अस्मात्परं वत यथाश्रुति संभृतानि को नः कुले निवपनानि प्रयच्छतीति
Raghuvaṁśa I. 66 :
नूनं मत्तः परं वंद्याः पिण्डविच्छेददर्शिनः ।
न प्रकामभुजः श्राद्धे स्वधासंग्रहतत्पराः ॥

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spiritual and divine element (परा प्रकृति) which makes man the rightful inheritor of divine glory and power. In the majority of mankind the lower nature gets the upper hand while a few lucky and happy ones succeed in subordinating and subjugating the beast in them and give free and full scope to their divine nature. In order to conquer the beast it must be starved, chastised and chastened by means of penance and hard discipline. Thus the flesh is brought under control, its lusts completely suppressed and gradually rendered powerless of mischief. As the spiritual element in man waxes stronger and stronger, he is endowed with extraordinary powers of vision and achievements. The latter are termed मानसी सिद्धिs and Kālidāsa refers to them more than once.[357] The sage Vasiṣṭha by the power of his penance could procure anything in the shape of creature comforts. So also Vālmīki is said to have entertained Śatrughna, when he was his guest on his way to the city of Madhūpaghna, in a right royal manner by virtue of his superhuman power.[358]

In *Śākuntala* Act IV when the hermit boys brought ornaments presented to Śakuntalā by the sylvan deities, the first thought that occurred to Gautamī was that they were the result of the spiritual power of the great sage, Śakuntalā's father.[359]

There is some difference between Tapaścaryā and Yogasamādhi (yogic concentration) although the latter also is styled penance or as a part of penance.[360] The Yogasamadhi of Śaṅkara is described by Kālidāsa in Canto III of *Kumārasambhava*[361] as follows: "Sitting in Padmāsana,

357. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 94 :
सत्यामपि तपःसिद्धौ नियमापेक्षया मुनिः ।
कल्पवित्कल्पयामास वन्यामेवास्य संविधाम् ॥

358. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 12.

359. *Śākuntala* Act IV, p. 130 : किं मानसी सिद्धिः ।

360. *Kumārasambhava* I. 57 :
स्वयं विधाता तपसः फलानां केनापि कामेन तपश्चचार ।

361. *Kumārasambhava* III. 45-50.

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the yogic posture achieved by crossing the legs in the prescribed fashion, with the upper portion of his body held upright and fully stretched, with the eyebrows and eyelashes motionless, the half-closed eyes fixed on the tip of the nose, all the vital breaths firmly controlled and the nine openings of the body tightly closed up, the Great Yogin looks within himself to enjoy the sight of the eternal and universal Being enthroned in the region of the heart." This is Yogasamādhi.

The Tapasyā as such is described in Canto V of *Kumārasambhava* in a graphic and detailed manner.[362] Pārvatī cast off all ornaments and put on a reddish-coloured bark garment, built up the *jaṭā* or matted hair, put on the three-threaded girdle causing painful friction to her delicate skin, developed scars and indents on her fingers by constantly uprooting and picking up the Kuśa grass, gave up playing with the ball—a recreation suitable to her tender years, and began counting the rosary of sacred beads, slept on the bare earth, daily watered the hermitage trees, and became the foster mother of the deer whom she fed with Nīvāra corn. Every day in the early morning, in the afternoon and in the evening she bathed in cold water, ignited the sacred fires and wore a deer-skin to cover the upper part of her body. Gradually she intensified her austerities as she saw no signs of the fulfilment of her cherished desire. She stood in the midst of four burning fires round about her, and stared fixedly at the midday sun with unflinching eyes, although the summer heat was at its height, resorted to the ways of the plants to sustain herself on such water as she obtained without effort and on the juicy rays of the moon. In the rainy season, she slept in the open in complete defiance of the incessant showers and stormy winds. In the cold season she stood immersed up to her neck in the icy cold water of tanks, her uprising face presenting the appearance of a full-blown solitary lotus in the tank; for some time she maintained herself with dry fallen leaves of the surrounding

362. *Kumārasambhava* V. 8-28.

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trees, but eventually she gave up even this miserable means of livelihood and thereafter acquired the name Aparṇā, i.e. one who does not eat even dry leaves fallen from the trees !!

What an awful description of penance and privations! The object of Pārvatī was to win Śiva for her husband which she ultimately achieved.

There is also reference to the austerities of various sages in Canto XIII of *Raghuvaṁśa*. पञ्चाग्निसाधन which is already referred to in verse 20 of Canto V of *Kumārasambhava* is mentioned in verse 41 of Canto XIII of *Raghuvaṁśa*.[363] There is a reference also to the vow of silence (वाचयमित्व) which is also a species of penance. (Mahatma Gandhi observed a day of complete silence.) This practice is said to encourage introspection and concentration during the period of silence.

In Act VII of *Śākuntala* the poet again refers to the austerities of sages. They are awe-inspiring and are beautifully described in verses 11 and 12 of that Act. A sage is represented as standing erect and immovable like a post presumably for years, staring with naked eyes at the sun, with a jungle of creepers springing round about him and embarrassing and covering almost the whole of his body, to which cast-off skins of serpents are sticking on, and which is half immersed in a growing ant-hill, and with his matted hair full of birds' nests![364] The other picture is equally striking from another point of view. A pious person by his austerities and good acts has already achieved a place in heaven—the place of perennial and unalloyed bliss, but in utter disregard of the lure of his pleasure-yielding surroundings, he is still represented as engaged in rigorous penance.[365] The reason given by the poet for this unusual behaviour is that aspirations of great

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363. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 41 :
हविर्भुजामेवतां चतुर्णां मध्ये ललाटंतपसप्तसप्तिः (तपस्यति)।

364. *Śākuntala* VII. 11 : वल्मीकाग्रनिमग्नमूर्तिरुरसा संदष्टसर्पत्वचा।

365. „ VII. 12 : प्राणानामनिलेन वृत्तिरुचिता सत्कल्पवृक्षे वने।

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souls are boundless.[366]

Even evil-minded persons like Tāraka and Rāvaṇa by performing arduous and prolonged penance could become irresistible and invincible. The only way to make them desist from continuing their fearful austerities, was for gods like Brahmā or Śaṅkara to confer on them tempting boons so as to make them desist from their penance and become arrogant, reckless, self-indulgent and wicked.[367] On account of such boons, being free from all restraint and fear they gave free rein to their wicked passions and the satisfaction of their unbridled desires and commenced to oppress and harass the people.[368] This antithesis of Tapasyā gradually deprived these evil-doers both of the immense soul force and wonderful powers which were acquired by their unremitting and hard penance and ultimately brought about their downfall. It was for this purpose that high-powered boons were conferred on wicked persons by the far-seeing gods.

The natural fruition of Tapasyā was the ascension to heaven and enjoyment of the super-pleasures and joys of that place. But a mortal's stay in heaven was strictly commensurate with his or her store of good merit, accumulated during the early existence. After such store was exhausted the soul again descended to the earth and became confined in the fleshy tabernacles to strive again after the attainment of fresh merit.[369] From these tiresome rounds of ascent and descent a mortal could only be saved by ब्रह्मसाक्षात्कार (realization of the true nature of Brahma, i.e. the Supreme Entity). High souls abhor these constant ups and downs and therefore loath sensual plea-

366. *Śākuntala* Act VII, p. 240 : उत्सर्पिणी खलु महतां प्रार्थना ।

367. *Kumārasambhava* II. 56 : वरेण शमितं लोकानलं दग्धुं हि तत्तपः ।

368. „ II. 32 : उपप्लवाय लोकानां धूमकेतुरिवोत्थितः ।

369. *Meghadūta* I. 30 :
स्वल्पीभूते सुचरितफले स्वर्गिणां गां गतानां
शेषैः पुण्यैर्हृतमिव दिवः कान्तिमत्खण्डमेकम् ।
Bhagavadgītā IX. 21 : ...क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।

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sures and carnal desires. It was for this reason that Paraśurāma when discomfited by Rāmacandra, requested the latter to discharge his arrow so as to block up his path heavenward as he was a Tapasvin (ascetic) first and last, and had no desire for the pleasure of the senses.[370] It is for this reason that sages described in verse 12 of Act VII of *Śākuntala* even though surrounded on all sides with tempting means of celestial enjoyment persisted in living a simple ascetic existence. Thus the basic idea of Hindu life is self-restraint, self-discipline and freedom from the thraldom of the senses. The hedonistic tendency which appears to permeate the writings of Kālidāsa is severely toned down and purified by the ideal of renunciation, abstinence, and mortification of the brute in man. Mark the juxtaposition in Canto VIII of *Raghuvaṁśa* of the description of Aja's enjoyment of the pleasures of youth with his beautiful wife, with the transcendental discourse on the problem of life and death in the concluding part of that canto. The aesthetic sense and capacity for enjoyment of the people had increased to a remarkable extent as their social life grew rich and replete with those graces, refinements and appetites which civilization and worldly prosperity brought in their train. The peculiar and exceptional trait of Indian character was that side by side with this exuberance and overflow of physical energy and craving for physical enjoyment flourished a spirit of abstemiousness, self-abnegation and rigorous self-discipline[371] which not only

370. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 87 :
तद्गतिं मतिमतां वरेप्सितां पुण्यतीर्थगमनाय रक्ष मे ।
पीडयिष्यति न मां खिलीकृता स्वर्गपद्धतिरभोगलोलुपम् ॥

371. *Raghuvaṁśa* I 23 :
अनाकृष्टस्य विषयैर्विद्यानां पारदृश्वनः ।
तस्य धर्मरतेरासीद्वृद्धत्वं जरसा विना ॥
Raghuvaṁśa I. 7 : प्रजायै गृहमेधिनाम् ।
„ II. 57 : एकान्तविध्वंसिषु मद्विधानां पिण्डेष्वनास्था खलु भौतिकेषु ।
Raghuvaṁśa V. 15 :
शरीरमात्रेण नरेन्द्र तिष्ठन्नाभासि तीर्थप्रतिपादितर्द्धिः ।
आरण्यकोपात्तफलप्रसूतिः स्तम्बेन नीवार इवावशिष्टः ॥

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kept in check, but spiritualized and sublimated the pleasure-loving trend which finds free expression in the "Song of the Seasons" and in the description of the unrestrained liaisons of Agnivarṇa.

HERMITAGES

In the writings of Kālidāsa therefore the descriptions of the penance-groves, i.e. the hermitages of the sages, occupy an important place. In *Śākuntala* and *Raghuvaṁśa* an atmosphere of peace, quiet happiness and spiritual eminence often relieves and tones down the scenes of splendour and voluptuous enjoyment. When king Duṣyanta unconsciously enters the sacred precincts of Kaṇva's hermitage, the sublime atmosphere itself warns him that he is on holy grounds and must restrain his hunting ardour. He observes that in the vicinity of forest trees the ground is strewn with Nīvāra corn dropped down from the nests of birds inhabiting their cavities and here and there sees pieces of stones besmeared with the oily juice of the Iṅgudī fruit which was used by the pious foresters for softening their matted hair, the water-channels everywhere intersecting the forest tract, the dripping bark garments hung for drying on the boughs of trees, the tame deer of the hermitage roaming about leisurely and fearlessly undisturbed by the rumblings of the royal chariot wheels, and the tender foliage of trees discoloured by constant contact with the smoke of the sacrificial fires.[372] The king stops the chariot and gets down to prevent disturbance and annoyance to the pious dwellers of the hermitage and

372. *Śākuntala* I. 13 :

नीवाराः शुकगर्भकोटरमुखभ्रष्टास्तरूणामधः
प्रस्निग्धाः क्वचिदिङ्गुदीफलभिदः सूच्यन्त एवोपलाः ।

Śākuntala I :

कुल्याम्भोभिः पवनचपलैः शाखिनो धौतमूलाः ।
भिन्नो रागः किसलयरुचामाज्यधूमोद्गमेन ॥

(This verse is supposed to be an interpolation because the last two lines repeat an idea already expressed in verse 13.)

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divests himself of his gorgeous princely raiments and ornaments out of respect for them.[373]

When in Act VII the king on the way of his descent to the earth is made to visit the hermitage of the divine patriarch Mārīcha, he feels as if he is suddenly in a sea of nectar.[374]

In *Raghuvaṁśa* the description of Vasiṣṭha's hermitage, though short, is strikingly charming.[375] It is believed that when the hermits return to the Āśrama from their excursions undertaken for gathering fruits, *samidhs*, grass, etc., the ignited holy fires proceed forth to welcome them. In the evening the entrances to the hermitage huts were crowded by deer regarded with parental affection by the dames of the hermitage, seeking their daily ration of Nīvāra corn. The girls after watering the trees hurriedly leave the site, so that the birds should freely drink from their basins. Such was the high regard and consideration for mere animal life![376] The outer spaces round about the huts where Nīvāra corn was collected in small heaps were at the day's end crowded by the deer of the hermitage peacefully chewing the cud.

In Canto V of *Raghuvaṁśa* when Kutsa the disciple of Varatantu approached Raghu for Gurudakṣiṇā (fee payable to his perceptor), Raghu's courteous inquiries after the initial welcome have reference to some salient features of the penance-grove. "Are the trees of the hermitage which are cherished and tended by you like your own children by fashioning basins around them and whose shade relieves you of heat and fatigue, free from cyclones and

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373. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 24:
विनीतवेषेण प्रवेष्टव्यानि तपोवनानि नाम ।

374. *Śākuntala* Act VII, p. 239:
स्वर्गादधिकतरं निर्वृतिस्थानम् । अमृतह्रदमिवावगाढोऽस्मि ।

375. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 49-53.

376. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 51:
सेकान्ते मुनिकन्याभिस्तत्क्षणोज्झितवृक्षकम् ।
विश्वासाय विहंगानामालवालाम्बुपायिनाम् ॥

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other cataclysms? Are the young ones of deer, who are reared on your laps and who are allowed to freely eat even the sacred Kuśa grass at their pleasure, in good health? Are the waters of the sacred streams unpolluted where you have your daily baths, whose water you offer to the manes on the Śrāddha day (the death anniversary of your ancestors), and whose banks are the receptacle of the king's share of the Nīvāra corn which is a free gift of nature to you? I hope the growing Nīvāra corn which is the chief means of your sustenance and whereby you entertain and feed your occasional guests is not ravaged by the cattle of the adjoining villages."[377] The trees of the hermitage were an important asset and a great necessity of the simple life of forest anchorites, as these supplied them with fruits and flowers and cool and refreshing shade which made it comfortable and bearable.[378] Among the favourite domestic animals the deer holds the premier place owing to the beauty and symmetry of its body and its loving and peaceful disposition. The cow is also another great favourite. It is significant that the dog and the cat had no place in the penance groves for the obvious reason that these animals are carnivorous by nature. The hermitages were always in the vicinity of everflowing rivers or streams as it was the custom of the ascetics to bathe three times a day (त्रिकालस्नान) and plenty of water was needed for watering trees and for other domestic purposes. As even in the present times growing corn has to be preserved from the ravages of the village cattle who are a great pest of the agriculturists, it was much more so in the case of these inoffensive hermits.[379]

Ascetic foresters were by nature kind, peaceful and inoffensive.[380] It was but natural that if some evil-minded person took undue advantage of their simple nature, they

377. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 5-9.

378. *Śākuntala* IV. 10 : छायाद्रुमैर्नियमितार्कमयूखतापः।

379. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 9 : नीवारपाकादि कडंगरीयैरामृश्यते जानपदैर्न कच्चित्।

380. ,, V. 54 : उष्णत्वमग्न्यातपसंप्रयोगाच्छैत्यं हि यत्सा प्रकृतिर्जलस्य।

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should flare up and exert their mystic spiritual powers to punish him. Even when driven to exasperation, they were soon mollified and tried to repair the mischief which their sudden outburst of anger had caused and when pleased they fulfilled the long-cherished desires of their devotees.[381] Like clouds at the commencement of the monsoon they sometimes hurled bolts from the blue but, as a rule, like clouds which blessed the earth with plentiful rain, they conferred rich boons when pleased.[382]

The female folk of the hermitage though they never assumed the absurd unnatural pose of ignorance in matters of sex were innocent of the perverted and vicious complexities of city life. It is impossible for a full-grown person to be absolutely ignorant of sex knowledge in any shape or form as all nature breathes of sex. Foresters are daily given ocular manifestations of unrestrained and open sex activities in the animal kingdom. As a result, however, of salutary forest life and freedom from most of the temptations of cities, the ascetics are normally averse to pleasure-seeking and sensation-mongering. Therefore in *Śākuntala*, Anasūya describes the anchorites as दुःखशील[383] i.e. morose and reserved!

The usual occupation during leisure hours in a Tapovana was to listen to religious discourses given by the Kulapati, i.e. the presiding sage of the hermitage.[384]

In these forest academies women were freely admitted both as students and ordinary inmates. Śakuntalā, her two girl friends and the old Gautamī are mentioned as the female residents of Kaṇvāśrama. Ātreyī in *Uttararāmacarita* is represented as wandering in search of a suitable hermit-

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381. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 34, 35, 55.

382. *Kumārasambhava* IV. 43 : अशनेरमृतस्य चोभयोर्वशिनश्चाम्बुधराश्च योनयः।

383. *Śākuntala* Act IV, p. 124 : दुःखशीले तपस्विजने कोऽभ्यर्थ्यताम्।

384. ,, Act VII, p. 240 :
दाक्षायण्या पतिव्रताधर्ममधिकृत्य पृष्टस्तस्यै महर्षिपत्नीसहिताये कथयतीति।

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age where she could study निगमान्तविद्या (esoteric philosophy). She was a student in the Vālmīki Āśrama but as she found it impossible to keep pace with such brilliant pupils as Kuśa and Lava, she was obliged to change her academy.[385] The question of co-education which is perplexing some eminent educationists even at present had been successfully solved by ancient Indians.

It was an inviolable rule of hermitage life that no living thing should be hurt or killed. In Act VII of *Śākuntala*, Duṣyanta, mistaking Sarvadamana as an offspring of an anchorite, chides him for worrying a lion's cub. So also a Tāpasī (lady anchorite) from the hermitage of the sage Cyavana restores the young prince Āyu to his parents as he had killed a vulture.[386]

Sometimes the highly spiritual atmosphere of the hermitage was so potent that beasts naturally hostile to one another stayed there on an entirely friendly footing and trees never lacked plentiful fruit wherewith to entertain guests;—such is the description of Pārvatī's penance-grove.[387]

Such were the forest academies or hermitages which were interspersed and scattered throughout the great continent of India and which incessantly diffused spiritual influence and true knowledge throughout the land. Although phenomenal peace and prosperity had made the people somewhat indolent and pleasure-seeking, it was the salutary influence infiltrating among all classes of people from these holy centres that kept them within strict bounds of decency and moral discipline. In the newly acquired Swaraj of India, our rulers should steadily keep in view

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385. *Uttararāmacarita* :
अस्मिन्नगस्त्यप्रमुखा प्रदेशे भूयांसमुद्वीथविदो वसन्ति ।
तेभ्योऽधिगन्तुं निगमान्तविद्यां वाल्मीकिपार्श्वादिह पर्यटामि ॥

386. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act V, p. 128 :
गृहीतामिषः किल गृध्र आश्रमपादपशिखरे निलीयमानो लक्ष्यीकृतो बाणस्य

387. *Kumārasambhava* V. 17 :
विरोधिसत्त्वोज्झितपूर्वमत्सरं द्रुमैरभीष्टप्रसवार्चितातिथि ।

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the necessity of establishing forest academies in sequestered forest tracts sanctified by beautiful natural surroundings and eloquent solitude so that as of old these holy places should keep on shedding their beneficial influence on populated cities and business centres. Such are some of the lessons which we moderns must learn from poet chroniclers like Kālidāsa.

MEDICINES AND PHYSICIANS

There are some references to medicines and physicians (भिषक्). It was admitted that the malaise of Aja could not be cured by physicians.[388] Some diseases were considered incurable[389], e.g., Typhoid fever. There were many herbs endowed with the wonderful power of curing wounds and maladies.[390] Medicines of the ancient Indians were mostly plants and vegetables and were discovered by assiduously watching the habits and movements of wild animals suffering from various diseases. Nature has implanted an unerring instinct in animals whereby when afflicted by illness or distemper they resort to particular herbs whose use is found to be an infallible cure for such diseases. Even in these days, people living in great jungles know wonderful medicines derived from plant life. In the case of king Agnivarṇa whose licentiousness exceeded all bounds, the royal physicians clearly foresaw the grave consequences and requested the king to cry halt to his mad career of vice and self-indulgence[391] but ultimately he met his inevitable fate[392] by turning a deaf ear to their advice.

388. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 93 :
प्राणान्तहेतुमपि तं भिषजामसाध्यं लाभं प्रियानुगमने त्वरया स मेने ।

389. *Kumārasambhava* II. 48 :
वीर्यवन्त्यौषधानीत्र विकारे सांनिपातिके (प्रतिहतक्रियाः) ।

390. *Raghuvaṁśa* XII. 78 : स मारुतिसमानीतमहौषधिहतव्यथः ।

391. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 49 :
दृष्टदोषमपि तन्न सोऽत्यजत्सङ्गवस्तु भिषजामनाश्रवः ।

392. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 53 :
वैद्ययत्नपरिभाविनं गदं प्राप्य दीप इव वायुमत्यगात् ।

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In *Mālavikāgnimitra* the Parivrājikā shows considerable knowledge regarding remedies against snake-bite which even in modern times will be considered fairly efficacious as first aids.[393] 'क्षतेर्वा रक्तमोक्षणम्' indicates the existence of a kind of crude surgery which, however, does not appear to be much advanced at that time.

Along with medical remedies mystic and mantric methods were applied and were credited with effective cures.[394] Even to the present day उदकुम्भविधान and other similar rites are resorted to to cure a person of snake-bite in some parts of India. Matrons and ladies of the house were as a rule acquainted with simple herbal remedies for minor wounds and distempers.[395] But above everything Indians both ancient and modern were more or less influenced by a fatalistic turn of mind which afforded them consolation when all available remedies failed. It was firmly believed that remedies however efficacious will bear fruit only if the patient has some portion of his allotted span of life still left.[396]

FAMILY LIFE AND MUTUAL RELATIONS OF ITS MEMBERS

The basic conception of family life in ancient India was broad-based on the patriarchal and joint family system. The joint family system was a socialistic or communistic experiment tried and found successful for some time within the narrow confines of family life, i.e., among groups of persons tied together by bonds of blood and affection. Joint families lived in India in apparent peace and prosperity for hundreds of years but the disintegrating and

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393. *Mālavikāgnimitra* IV. 4 : छेदो दंशस्य दाहो वा क्षतेर्वा रक्तमोक्षणम्।

394. ,, Act VI, p. 69 :
ध्रुवसिद्धिर्विज्ञापयति उदकुम्भविधानेन सर्पमुद्रितं किमपि कल्पयितव्यम्।

395. *Śākuntala* IV. 13 :
यस्य त्वया व्रणविरोपणमिङ्गुदीनां तैलं न्यषिच्यत मुखे कुशसूचिविद्धे।

396. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 40 : प्रतिकारविधानमायुषः सति शेषे हि फलय कल्पते।

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highly individualistic tendencies brought into being by contact with Western thought and culture before long sounded the death knell of this institution. Any specific reference to joint family is not found in Kālidāsa's writings although the idea appears quite familiar. Rāma and his brothers lived jointly right down to the time of their death. The eldest brother Rāma was the head of the family.

FATHER: The father was held in the highest respect and veneration by his children. Rāma readily renounced his rightful place as the heir-apparent to the throne and exiled himself for fourteen years to fulfil a rash promise given by his father to one of his wives.[397] So also the absorbing devotion of Śrāvaṇa to his old parents who, smitten by his sudden and accidental death, immolated themselves on his funeral pyre in the intensity of their grief.[398] Aja's entreaties to his father (Raghu) not to leave the kingdom and repair to the forest is another instance of deep filial attachment. Raghu after his heroic fight with Indra for the recovery of the sacrificial horse, when he was persuaded to withdraw from the conflict, requested his erstwhile opponent Indra to arrange for informing his father, who was inaccessible having been engaged in a sacrificial performance, of the circumstances under which he had to surrender the sacrificial horse to Indra.[399]

MOTHER: The mother was regarded with equal veneration. Even the stepmother is treated with great deference and affection. Kaikeyī was responsible for Rāma's exile and also the death of Daśaratha. Still Rāma after his return from exile addressed her thus after humbly touching her feet: "O mother! it is entirely due to you that our father did not prove false to his promise and thereby has

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397. *Raghuvaṁśa* XII. 7 : पश्चाद्वनाय गच्छेति तदाज्ञां मुदितोऽग्रहीत् ।

398. „ IX. 81 :
एधान्हुताशनवतः स मुनिर्ययाचे पुत्रं परासुमनुगन्तुमनाः सदारः ।

399. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 66.

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attained to heaven." In this way Rāma removed the sense of shame from the mother of Bharata.[400]

CHILDREN: The love of parents for the children was equally ardent and abiding. We have already referred to the voluntary self-immolation of the parents of Śrāvaṇa who were completely broken-hearted at his sudden death. Kaikeyī brought about her widowhood by separating Rāma from his father.

The sudden ebullition of parental feelings in the case of Duṣyanta on meeting Sarvadamana in Mārīcāśrama and the memorable and highly poetic expression the poet has given to his intense yearning for the supreme bliss of contact with his long lost child is one of the well-known beauty-spots in *Śākuntala*.[401] So also Purūravas on seeing his grown-up son Āyu who was separated from him since his birth, wonders how much more intense must be affection for a son who is reared on the lap of his father.[402]

The attachment for the daughter is no less in evidence. The transcendent and matchless beauty of the Fourth Act of *Śākuntala* owes much to the touching affection of the old sage Kaṇva for his foster-child Śakuntalā.[403] The great love which Himālaya entertained for his beautiful and gifted daughter Pārvatī finds expression more than once in *Kumārasambhava*.[404]

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400. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 16.
Śākuntala Act II, p. 81 :
इतस्तपस्विकार्यम्। इतो गुरुजनाज्ञा। द्वयमप्यनतिक्रमणीयम्।
401. *Śākuntala* VII. 17 :
आलक्ष्यदन्तमुकुलाननिमित्तहासैरव्यक्तवर्णरमणीयवचःप्रवृत्तीन्।
402. *Vikramorvaśīya* V. 10 : उत्सङ्गवर्धितानां गुरुषु भवेत्कीदृशः स्नेहः।
403. *Śākuntala* IV. 5 :
वैक्लव्यं मम तावदीदृशमिदं स्नेहादरण्यौकसः
पीड्यन्ते गृहिणः कथं न तनयाविश्लेषदुःखैर्नवैः।
404. *Kumārasambhava* I. 27 :
महीभृतः पुत्रवतोऽपि दृष्टिस्तस्मिन्नपत्ये न जगाम तृप्तिम्।
Kumārasambhava VII. 4 :
आसन्नपाणिग्रहणेति पित्रोरुमा विशेषोच्छ्वसितं बभूव।
Kumārasambhava VIII. 21 : आत्मजाविरहदुःखखेदितम्।

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WIFE: In spite of the somewhat unsatisfactory and dependent status of women in family life, the ideal of wife-hood was very high.[405] She was pictured as occupying the honoured position of a wife, counsellor, friend, beloved disciple as regards the study of fine arts such as singing, dancing, portraiture. A grander conception of conjugal affection is hard to meet with, than what is conveyed in the below quoted verse.[406] "In sorrow and happiness, the same; kindly and sympathetic in all conditions of life; where the heart finds an unfailing solace; which loses none of its intensity and interest even in old age; and develops into the quintessence of affection after the lapse of time owing to complete disappearance of all reserve and restraint. Oh! Such supreme conjugal bliss is reserved by the gods for a few fortunate mortals!" In another verse in *Uttararāmacarita* the poet is equally eloquent in describing the husband's deep attachment for his wife.[407] Kālidāsa though more restrained in phrase and more terse in style has given appealing expression to the deep solicitude and affection of the husband and lover for his mate.[408] The

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405. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 67 :
गृहिणी सचिवः सखी मिथः प्रियशिष्या ललिते कलाविधौ ।

406. *Uttararāmacarita* I. 29 :
अद्वैतं सुखदुःखयोरनुगुणं सर्वास्ववस्थासु यद्
विश्रामो हृदयस्य यत्र जरसा यस्मिन्नहार्यो रसः ।
कालेनावरणात्ययात्परिणते यत्स्नेहसारे स्थितं
धन्यं तस्य सुमानुषस्य कथमप्येकं हि तत्प्राप्यते ॥

407. *Uttararāmacarita* I. 38 : इयं गेहे लक्ष्मीः ।

408. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 6 :
उपेत्य सा दोहददुःखशीलतां यदेव वव्रे तदपश्यदाहृतम् ।
Raghuvaṁśa VIII. 52 :
मनसापि न विप्रियं मया कृतपूर्वं तव किं जहासि माम् ।
Raghuvaṁśa XIV. 27 :
विलज्जमानां रहसि प्रतीतः पप्रच्छ रामां रमणोऽभिलाषम् ।
Śākuntala III. 19 : कथमातपे गमिष्यसि परिबाधा पेलवैरङ्गैः ।
„ III. 18 : किं शीतलैः कुसुमविनोदिभिरार्द्रवातान्संचारयामि ।

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restrictions imposed on the liberty of the womanhood were mainly due to the anxiety of the law-givers to keep the race pure, unadulterated and unpolluted. The almost morbid regard for the chastity of family ladies is evident from the unjust and arbitrary treatment of Sītā by her husband. We have already dealt with the excessive and almost theatrical courtesy with which ladies of the upper classes were treated, as well as with their social status.

Next to father and mother the elder brother commanded the respect and obedience of the younger ones.[409] The loyalty and implicit obedience rendered to Rāma by his three brothers can hardly find a parallel elsewhere. Lakṣmaṇa voluntarily followed Rāma in his exile and shared his hardships and dangers. Bharata's extraordinary fidelity and affection for his eldest brother and his utter disregard for the royal crown which had accidentally fallen in his lap is an illuminating and inspiring chapter in *Rāmāyaṇa* far above the level of the sordid and self-seeking humanity in general.[410] Even the intensely repellent task of abandoning in the forest Sītā in her advanced pregnancy was performed by Lakṣmaṇa without cavil or protest as it was the mandate of his kind and eldest brother. Later on the heroic prince had to violate the pledge given to the God of Death by his brother and seek death by throwing himself into the river Śarayū, a few days before Rāma, who also ended his earthly life in a similar way along with his other brothers and thousands of loyal citizens of Ayodhyā.

Mālavikāgnimitra IV. 3 :
चरणं रुजा परीतं कलभाषिणि मां च पीडयितुम् (नार्हसि)।
Meghadūta II. 33 :
संभोगान्ते मम समुचितो हस्तसंवाहनानां
यास्यत्यूरुः सरसकदलीस्तम्भगौरश्चलत्वम्।

409. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 46 : आज्ञा गुरूणां ह्यविचारणीया।
410. " XII. 16 : परिवेत्तारमात्मानं मेने स्वीकरणाद्ध्रुवः।

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The same family tradition was followed by the next generation. Kuśa the eldest member of the royal family was treated with special respect and generosity by his younger brothers and cousins.[411] The implicit obedience and unbounded respect given by the four Pāṇḍavas to Dharma the eldest of them is a well-known illustration of the same family convention.

We have already written about marriage as an important, sacred and inviolable institution of Hindu social life. Conception of wifehood involved obligations of fidelity, obedience and strict discipline. The belligerent, bellicose and self-assertive mental pose of some modern women demanding equal rights in all spheres of life without a thought of sharing corresponding responsibilities and burdens in an equal degree, was unknown in the times whereof Kālidāsa writes. The portraiture of Sītā both in *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Raghuvaṁśa* is far grander and much more appealing than that of Rāma himself. There are few incidents in the world's literature, nobler and more moving than Sītā's message to her erring and cruel husband in Canto XIV of *Raghuvaṁśa* (vv. 60-67) and later on her voluntary disappearance into the bowels of the Earth to escape the fresh affront sought to be heaped on her.[412] It will be noted, however, that in spite of the most provocative treatment from her husband, she never for an instant loses her balance or utters a single harsh word likely to derogate from the lofty and self-effacing ideal of a Hindu wife.

Similarly in *Śākuntala* when Duṣyanta in a fit of penitence prostrates himself before his grievously wronged wife, her rejoinder to him is typically characteristic of an ideal wife.[413] Sītā's explanation of her desertion by her

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411. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 1 :
चक्रुः कुशं रत्नविशेषभाजं सौभ्रात्रमेषां हि कुलानुसारि।

412. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 77-84.

413. *Śākuntala* Act VII, p. 253 :
नूनं मे सुचरितप्रतिबन्धकं पुराकृतं तेषु दिवसेषु परिणाममुखमासीद्येन सानुक्रोशोऽप्यार्यपुत्रो मयि विरसः संवृत्तः।

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husband is similar.[414]

Family relations in those days appear to have been characterized by a spirit of service and self-sacrifice and not a commercial spirit which expects a return for everything.

Some uncomplimentary remarks, however, are met with in Kālidāsa and also elsewhere in Sanskrit literature regarding the innate cunning and sefishness of woman.[415]

It is this long suffering patience and loving nature of the Hindu womanhood developed to a remarkable extent which made the existence of joint Hindu families possible in India for hundreds of years. In modern times in spite of much talk of socialism and communism everybody thinks that he or she is the centre of the universe and expects all others to pander to his or her wishes and whims.

The above is meant to give an idea of the family life of the ancient Indian people. Self-sacrifice, service, courtesy, deep affection, an unswerving loyalty to past traditions and sentiments, veneration for elders, were some of the salient features of the Hindu social life in ancient days. Hypocritical prudery and sneaking secrecy about the dominant facts of life were almost unknown. A salutary equilibrium between the pleasure-seeking tendencies of human nature and the higher spiritual instinct which craved emancipation from the thraldom of worldly existence and the introspective and contemplative bent of mind engendered by a system of philosophy second to none in the world in its unique quality of giving satisfaction and solace to the perplexed mind are fully evidenced in the writings of this master poet. For want of such a well-established equilibrium many other equally civilized nations fell a prey to the crescendo of passion and intemperate self-indulgence. Thus king Agnivarṇa was an exception in those days and Dilīpa, Raghu, Rāma and Atithi the rule. What other nation can claim such magnificent

414. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 62 :
ममैव जन्मान्तरपातकानां विपाकविस्फूर्जथुरप्रसह्यः।

415. *Śākuntala* V. 22 : स्त्रीणामशिक्षितपटुत्वममानुषीषु संदृश्यते।

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examples of princely bounty like Raghu (or King Harṣa of Kanouj in comparatively recent times[416]) who, after vanquishing the then known world, gave away to deserving mendicants the vast wealth accumulated by him in his victorious campaign, leaving nothing behind except earthen pots and pans for his own use ?

POPULATION

A few words as regards the population of ancient India as indicated by Kālidāsa's writings will not be out of place in this chapter. For this purpose the country may be conveniently divided into four regional categories: (1) cities and large towns, (2) villages, (3) forest tracts and (4) mountainous districts. It appears that at about this period the penetration and conquest of India by the Aryan invaders from the north was almost complete. The aborigines—the monkeys and the Rākṣasas or Piśitāśanas or by whatever other names they might have been known—were driven deep into the forests. The Rākṣasas waged an incessant guerilla warfare against the victorious intruders. They were avowed enemies of the Aryan culture and Aryan religion especially of the sacrificial performances (यज्ञs) which occupied an honoured place in the Hindu religious life of the time and tried their utmost to obstruct and if possible to destroy such rites. Thus the Rākṣasas perpetually harassed and molested the Ṛṣis and ascetics who lived on the outskirts of the forest tracts.[417] These demons and Rākṣasas were reputed to possess mystic powers of black

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416. Testimony of Huen Tsang, the Chinese traveller.

417. *Śākuntala* Act II, p. 79 :
तत्रभवतः कण्वस्य महर्षेरसांनिध्याद्रक्षांसि न इष्टिविघ्नमुत्पादयन्ति ।
Śākuntala III. 24 :
सायंतने सवनकर्मणि संप्रवृत्ते वेदीं हुताशनवतीं परितः प्रयस्ताः ।
Raghuvaṁśa XI. 25 :
वीक्ष्य वेदिमथ रक्तबिन्दुभिर्बन्धुजीवपृथुभिः प्रदूषिताम् ।
Raghuvaṁśa XV. 2 : लवणेन विलुप्तेज्यास्तामिस्रेण तमभ्ययुः ।

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magic.[418] They took various shapes and forms and appeared and disappeared at their pleasure. In *Raghuvaṁśa* Canto XII Śūrpaṇakhā, the younger sister of Rāvaṇa, is said to have assumed a beautiful form with a view to tempt Rāma to accept her as his mate and subsequently resumed her real form.[419] Thereafter the demon Mārīca took the form of a golden deer with a view to draw away Rāma from the hermitage, thus giving an opportunity to Rāvaṇa to abduct Sītā who was left without protection.[420] While war between Rāma and Rāvaṇa was in progress, a Rākṣasa named Vidyujjihva produced before Sītā an illusory head of Rāma who was represented to her as having been killed by Rāvaṇa in the battle.[421] These aborigines were termed Piśitāśanas as their staple food was animal flesh. They were also named Māyāvins and Tāmisras as they practised black magic and moved in the darkness of the night. Pañcavaṭī, Janasthāna, Daṇḍakāraṇya were forest regions infested at that time by these barbarous tribes. When Rāma after leaving Ayodhyā penetrated into the southern part of India he met with and destroyed a great number of these hostile tribes[422] and made these tracts safe for ascetics and anchorites.[423] Rāma is venerated as an incarnation of the Supreme God Viṣṇu as he finally broke up the power and resistance of the hostile aborigines of the southern part of India and reduced them to submission by placing Bibhīṣaṇa on the throne of Laṅkā as his vassal.[424]

The next group of aboriginal tribes referred to by Kālidāsa are the monkeys. Sugrīva was their king. He is also named Ṛkṣaharīśvara as he claimed allegiance of

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418. *Śākuntala* III. 24 :
छायाश्चरन्ति बहुधा भयमादधानाः संध्यापयोदकपिशाः पिशिताशनानाम्।
419. *Raghuvaṁśa* XII. 38 : रूपं शूर्पणखा नान्नः सदृशं प्रत्यपद्यत ।
420. „ XII. 33.
421. „ XII. 74.
422. „ XII. 45-50.
423. „ XIII. 22.
424. „ XII. 104 : प्रियसुहृदि विभीषणे संगमय्य श्रियं वैरिणः ।

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another clan who were styled "the bears" (ऋक्ष).[425] Jāmbavat was a famous bear-chief in Lord Kṛṣṇa's time. On hearing the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa, Rāma contracted a friendly alliance with the monkey chief Sugrīva who was also at war with his powerful brother Vāli.[426] Why these people were called 'monkeys' is a somewhat intriguing question. They were undoubtedly less civilized than the Aryans and their physiognomy much differed from that of the Aryan type. Their appearance also was rough, grotesque and ill-favoured. It must have been the characteristic arrogance and self-conceit of the conquering races which made the Aryans brand some of the aborigines as "monkeys" and others as "bears". The Indians have a great veneration for Hanūmat, the great general and warrior of the Rāmāyaṇa war who is regarded as an incarnation of God Śaṅkara himself.

In verse 74 of Canto XIII of *Raghuvaṁśa* it is stated that Rāma made the monkeys' chiefs mount elephants "after giving them the shape of men".[427] It may mean that Rāma got them dressed up in the civilized Aryan fashion.

In Canto IV of *Raghuvaṁśa*, Raghu in the course of his triumphal campaign reached the Himālayas where he came across the Kirātas[428] who appear to be a race of wild foresters inhabiting the wooded flanks of that mountain. The Kirātas are referred to in *Ratnāvalī* as a wandering race.[429] On the Himālayas Raghu had to give a stiff fight to certain mountain clans (पर्वतीय गण).[430] The clan of Utsavasaṁketas was one of them.[431] The Utsavasaṁketas are supposed by some to be a class of foresters whose sexual life was of a loose and unrestrained nature. In verse 78 of

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425. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 72 : दुर्जातबन्धुरयमृक्षहरीश्वरो मे ।
426. ,, XII. 57 : मुमूर्च्छ सख्यं रामस्य समानव्यसने हरौ
427. ,, XIII. 74 : कृत्वा मनुष्यवपुः ।
428. ,, IV. 76.
429. *Ratnāvalī* II. 3 : सदृशं नाम्ना किरातैः कृतं ।
430. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 77.
431. ,, IV. 78

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Canto IV of *Raghuvaṁsa* Kinnaras are also referred to as a class of musicians.[432] These Kinnaras are also known as the professional musicians of the Gods—a real or fictitious race just like the Gandharvas who are mentioned in Canto XV of *Raghuvaṁśa* as having been conquered in fight by Bharata.[433]

In Canto I of *Kumārasambhava* in the description of Himalaya Apsarases[434], Kirātas[435], Vidyādharas[436], Kinnaras[437], Aśvamukhas[438], Kiṁpuruṣas[439] find a reference. In *Meghadūta* Yakṣas, the inhabitants of Alakā, occupy a conspicuous place.

All these appear to be mountain tribes living in almost complete seclusion and isolation from the inhabitants of the plains and therefore endowed by them with a mystic glamour. Not much is known of these tribes.

It was inevitable that the vast expanse of the continent of India should be infested with nomadic hordes of robbers and freebooters such as are graphically described in v. 10 of Act V of *Mālavikāgnimitra*.[440] These are described as Durjāti, i.e., of low origin, waifs and strays of humanity.

Kālidāsa's date must certainly be posterior to the Greek invasion and we therefore find mention to Ionian or Greek girls (Yavanīs) as attendants of Duṣyanta, bearing wreaths of flowers and having bows in their hands.[441]

The Gaṇas of Śaṅkara are supposed to be semi-divine persons who accompanied him wherever he went. In Canto XI of *Kumārasambhava* they celebrate the birth of

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432. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 78.
433. „ XV. 88.
434. *Kumārasaṃbhava* I. 4.
435. „ I. 6.
436. „ I. 7.
437. „ I. 8.
438. „ I. 11.
439. „ I. 14.
440. *Mālavikāgnimitra* V. 10 : तूणीरपट्टपरिणद्धभुजान्तरालम् ।
441. *Śākuntala* Act II, p. 57 :
एष बाणासनहस्ताभिर्यवनीभिर्वनपुष्पमालाधारिणीभिः परिवृत इत एवागच्छति ।

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Kumāra.[442] Pramathas among the Gaṇas were regarded as professional buffoons (हास्यरसदेवता).[443]

AMUSEMENTS

In the case of the princely order and presumably of the aristocracy and the richer classes, it may be safely said that Mṛgayā or hunting was a favourite recreation. Only the Brahmins and hermits abstained from that murderous sport. Excessive addiction to hunting was considered a vice especially in royalty.[444] A moderate indulgence in that sport, however, was considered, not only as a necessary relaxation but as a means of excellent exercise and useful practice in archery and for cultivating presence of mind in the face of danger. Hunting being a strenuous exercise was calculated to reduce superfluous fat[445] and also made the hunter acquainted with the outward signs of anger and fear in the case of wild beasts. It also appears that occasional hunting relieved the agriculturists from the devastation of their crops due to the inroads of wild beasts of the jungle such as boars or deer, and offered them protection from dangerous animals such as tigers and lions. Elaborate preparations had to be made before kings and high potentates graced the forest by their presence for the purpose of hunting—dog-boys and snarers were sent there in advance, fires if any were extinguished, robbers and freebooters were driven out, ditches and lowlands were levelled up, and wells dug out at convenient distances.[446] In India the best time for hunting is the hot season as in those days the forests are thinned out by the disappearance

442. *Kumārasambhava* XI. 31.

443. „ VII. 95.

444. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 7 :
न मृगयाभिरतिर्न दुरोदरं न च शशिप्रतिमाभरणं मधु ।
तमुदयाय न वा नवयौवना प्रियतमा यतमानमपाहरत् ॥

445. *Śākuntala* II. 5 : मेदश्छेदकृशोदरं लघु भवत्युत्थानयोग्यं वपुः ।
Raghuvaṁśa IX. 49 : परिचयं चललक्ष्यनिपातने ।

446. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 53.

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of thick foliage, which in other seasons offers a convenient cover to beasts for concealment from the pursuit of hunters.[447] The summer in most parts of India is however very hot and sultry and the basins of rivers naturally dry up, leaving ditch-water here and there which is distasteful and unhealthy on account of rotting leaves from the surrounding trees.[448] Hunger is appeased by means of the flesh of animals bagged in the course of hunting, which is roasted in roughly improvised pits on iron tongs and pincers.[449] Very early in the morning forest-beaters disturb the sleep of the tired hunters by the hullabaloo which they raise for the purpose of driving out the beasts out of their lairs. Thus in a few quick, skilful touches, the poet has sketched a vivid word-picture of an Indian hunting expedition in Act II of *Śākuntala*. The description of hunting in Canto IX of *Raghuvaṁśa* is not half so graphic and impressive as that in *Śākuntala* although the latter is more brief and terse.

Curiously there is no detailed reference to gambling anywhere in the writings of Kālidāsa except a passing one in verse 9 of Canto IX. (For a very graphic description of gambling vide *Mṛcchakaṭika* Act II.)

Next to *mṛgayā* is *jalakrīḍā* or water-sport especially in the Grīṣma or hot season. The poet describes ग्रीष्मसमय or hot season in v. 3 of Act I of *Śākuntala*[450] and in much greater detail in vv. 43-53 of Canto XVI of *Raghuvaṁśa* and Canto I of *Ṛtusaṁhāra*. In the hot season rich people were said to pass the time of intense heat during the day lying on cool stone-slabs covered with sandal-paste in enclosures surrounded by cool currents of running water

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447. *Śākuntala* Act II, p. 55 : ग्रीष्मविरलपादपच्छायासु वनराजिषु ।

448. „ Act II, p. 55 : पत्रसंकरकषायाणि गिरिनदीजलानि पीयन्ते ।

449. „ Act II, p. 55 : अनियतवेलं शूल्यमांसभूयिष्ठ आहारो भुज्यते ।

„ Act II, p. 56 :

महत्येव प्रत्यूषे दास्याः पुत्रैः शकुनिलुब्धकैर्वनग्रहणकोलाहलेन प्रतिबोधितोऽस्मि ।

450. *Śākuntala* I. 3 : सुभगसलिलावगाहाः ।

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and equipped with shower-baths.[451] The chief recreation in Grīṣma is *jalakrīḍā* or water-sport and this is described in detail in Canto XVI of *Raghuvaṁśa*.[452] When royalty expressed a desire for water-sports the river banks were provided with beautiful tents to accommodate the royal entourage and retinue. The crocodiles were all dragged out of the river. Ladies especially were very fond of this pleasant pastime and showed themselves to best advantage when freely indulging in various frolics such as beating up the water with their hands to keep time with joyous songs sung by them and throwing water on others either by hand or by means of golden syringes.

By some strange device it appears that sporting resorts were constructed below water, both for the sake of coolness in hot season and for effective concealment and privacy. Thus the sage Śātakarṇi was consigned by the jealous gods in an underwater vault in company with five sylvan damsels to pass his time in amorous dalliance and music.[453] King Agnivarṇa had also secret haunts for sexual enjoyment below water.[454] In *Mahābhārata* after the termination of the great war Duryodhana, the sole surviving son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, is mentioned as hiding himself below the surface of water by means of जलस्तम्भिनी विद्या (a *mantra* by which water is made a fit resting place for humans).

The rich people also resorted to high altitudes to enjoy themselves.[455] The gardens round about the city were taken full advantage of by the citizens who took their sweet-

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451. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 49 :
यन्त्रप्रवाहैः शिशिरैः परीतान्स्वेन धौतान्मलयोद्भवस्य ।
शिलाविशेषानधिशय्य निन्युर्धारागृहेष्वाऽऽतपमृद्धिमन्तः ॥

452. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 55-71.

453. „ XIII. 38.

454. „ XIX. 9 : गूढमोहनगृहास्तदम्बुभिः स व्यगाहत विगाढमन्मथः ।

455. *Meghadūta* I. 25 :
नीचैराख्यं गिरिमधिवसेस्तत्र विश्रामहेतोस्त्वत्संपर्कात्पुलकितमिव प्रौढपुष्पैः कदम्बैः ।
यः पण्यस्त्रीरतिपरिमलोद्गारिभिर्नागराणामुद्दामानि प्रथयति शिलावेश्मभिर्यौवनानि ॥
Kumārasambhava VIII. 28 : गन्धमादनवनं व्यगाहत ।

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hearts along with them for pleasure and recreation.[456] Aja repaired with Indumatī to the garden on the outskirts of the city to drink the cup of conjugal felicity to the full as if subconsciously aware that he was soon to be permanently separated from his dear wife in a mysterious manner.

Dolotsava, the swing festival, was a very charming custom of those times. It is still in existence in certain parts of India. Young lovers especially in the beginning of the vernal season took delight in the sport. Young girls enjoying the swing with their lovers often made a feint of slipping down and with a view to save themselves indulged in necking raptures.[457]

INDIAN COLONIES

India in those days appears to have been a great maritime and seafaring nation having commercial and also cultural relations with the entire then-known world and colonies were established in far-flung parts of the earth as is clearly evidenced by relics of Hindu culture and religion met with in very distant and unexpected places. In *Raghuvaṁśa* inhabitants of Vaṅga (Bengal) are described as नौसाधनोद्यत (well-equipped with ships).[458] In *Śākuntala* a merchant named Dhanamitra is said to have perished on the high seas.[459] In Canto IV of *Raghuvaṁśa* Raghu is said to have chosen the land-route for reaching Persia.[460] This necessarily means that there must have been a sea-route also.

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456. *Meghadūta* II. 8.
Raghuvaṁśa VIII. 32 : नगरोपवने सह देव्या विजहार सुप्रजाः ।
Vikramorvaśīya Act IV, p. 87 :
उर्वशी राजर्षिं गृहीत्वा गन्धमादनवनं विहर्तुं गता ।

457. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 46.
„ XIX. 44.

458. „ IV. 36 : नौसाधनोद्यतान् ।

459. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 219 :
समुद्रव्यवहारी सार्थवाहो धनमित्रो नाम नौव्यसने विपन्नः ।

460. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 60 : प्रतस्थे स्थलवर्त्मना ।

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Chapter XI

THE KING AND KINGLY DUTIES

During the period about which Kālidāsa writes, absolute monarchy appears to be the prevailing form of government. The doctrine of the "Divine Right of Kings" held sway and there were very few checks on the all-powerful kings. It was considered that the heavy responsibility of government could only be borne and properly discharged by princes of the royal blood whose high heredity fitted them for the task.[1] It is only a *gandhagaja* who though of tender years can vanquish and dominate over ordinary elephants. The poison of even a young stripling of a cobra can kill in double quick time. So, says the poet, even an infant king can successfully rule his kingdom by virtue of his inherited qualities. So great was the respect in which a royal person was held that even an abandoned libertine like Agnivarṇa when he impudently put out his foot through the window aperture of the palace at the earnest request of his ministers for showing himself to his loyal and anxious subjects, such दर्शन or sight was acclaimed with enthusiasm and gratitude by the people as a token of royal favour![2] It is no wonder, therefore, that ideal kings like Dilīpa, Raghu, Rāma, Atithi were regarded and worshipped as almost divine beings.

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1. *Vikramorvaśīya* V. 18 : न खलु वयसा जात्यैवायं स्वकार्यसहो भरः ।
   Raghuvaṁśa XVIII. 45 :
   शिरीषपुष्पाधिकसौकुमार्यः खेदं स यायादपि भूषणेन ।
   नितान्तगुर्वीमपि सोऽनुभावाद्धुरं धरित्र्या बिभरांबभूव ॥

2. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 7 :
   गौरवाद्यदपि जातु मन्त्रिणां दर्शनं प्रकृतिकाङ्क्षितं ददौ ।
   तद्गवाक्षविवरावलम्बिना केवलेन चरणेन कल्पितम् ॥

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There is an indication at the end of Canto XIX of *Raghuvaṁśa* that the leaders and representatives of the people were consulted and taken into confidence on critical and important occasions.[3] The ministers assembled the chief representatives of the people and in consultation with them placed on the throne the pregnant queen of Agnivarṇa so that the empty throne should not tempt hostile neighbouring kings to attack the territories of the state. With this exception there is hardly any mention throughout Kālidāsa's writings of the importance of the representative voice of the people as affecting or regulating the governmental policy. Kings like Rāma attached immense value to the opinion of their subjects as is evidenced from Rāma's abandoning his faithful and loving wife due to impertinent scandal-mongering on the part of a mere washerman (रजक). Kālidāsa may be right in his surmise that the prime cause of this drastic and unjust act was the overweening regard for family prestige and race-pride on the part of Rāma and an earnest desire to retain the good opinion of his subjects high and low.[4] The ideal of kingship outlined in Kālidāsa's works is very lofty and only a few kings could have reached it in their personal rule.

Although monarchy stands discredited in modern times it will always remain a controversial point whether beneficent personal rule or a popular or democratic form of government has got most advantages. While monarchy may culminate and degenerate in irresponsible and oppressive autocracy, what is styled democracy may easily end in chaotic mob-rule or the rule of a small powerful clique ruling the country in the name of the people. In pre-Swaraj India, autocracies like Baroda, Mysore, Gwalior made

3. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 55 :
तैः कृतप्रकृतिमुख्यसंग्रहैराशु तस्य सहधर्मचारिणी ।
साधु दृष्टशुभगर्भलक्षणा प्रत्यपद्यत नराधिपश्रियम् ॥

4. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 41 :
रक्षोवधान्तो न च मे प्रयासो व्यर्थः स वैरप्रतिमोचनाय ।
अमर्षणः शोणितकाङ्क्षया किं पदा स्पृशन्तं दशति द्विजिह्वः ॥

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their subjects much more contented and happy than the inhabitants of British India, which was then ruled by the democratically-minded British people. We may go further and say that the people of the States recently annexed by our popular Congress government are mostly of opinion that they were much happier under their autocratic rulers than they are at present under the so-called popular and benign Congress Swaraj.

We shall now advert to the various qualities of an ideal king as enumerated by the poet.

A king first and foremost must be a person of august and imposing presence and mighty body.[5] He must be lusty and vigorous. Sunandā, the companion of princess Indumatī on the occasion of the latter's *svayaṁvara*, describes Aṅganātha (the king of the Aṅgas) as सुराङ्गना-प्रार्थितयौवनश्रीः, i.e., a specimen of excellent manhood who was sought after by even celestial damsels. Similarly the king of Avanti is described by her as of well-developed arms, broad chest and lean in the middle part of his body.[6] Duṣyanta is extolled as having arms as strong as the iron bars which close the main entrance of a city.[7] The reason for the insistence on this quality in a king is obvious. A strong, beautiful and imposing body naturally inspires the beholder with respect.[8]

Secondly the king must be well-versed in all sciences

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5. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 13 : व्यूढोरस्को वृषस्कन्धः शालप्रांशुर्महाभुजः ।
„ I. 14 :
सर्वातिरिक्तसारेण सर्वतेजोऽभिभाविना ।
स्थितः सर्वोन्नतेनोर्वीं क्रान्त्वा मेरुरिवात्मना ॥
Raghuvaṁśa III. 34 : युवा युगव्यायतबाहुरंसलः कपाटवक्षाः परिणद्धकन्धरः ।
„ II. 4 : स्ववीर्यगुप्ता हि मनोः प्रसूतिः ।
6. „ VI. 32 : अवन्तिनाथोऽयमुदग्रबाहुर्विशालवक्षास्तनुवृत्तमध्यः ।
7. *Śākuntala* II. 15 : धरित्रीमेकः कृत्स्नां नगरपरिघप्रांशुबाहुर्भुनक्ति ।
8. आकृतिविशेषेष्वादरः पदं करोति ।
Kumārasambhava V. 31 :
भवन्ति साम्येऽपि निविष्टचेतसां वपुर्विशेषेष्वतिगौरवाः क्रियाः ।

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and arts.[9] It was also necessary for him to study the Dhanurvidyā.[10]

Among the *śāstras* the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya held a place of honour and the king had to know how to make use of the six ways of strategy enjoined by Kauṭilya.[11] Paṇabandha was the art of negotiating peace or treaty with the enemy.

The kings were also instructed in the science of deceiving their opponents or rather avoiding being deceived by them.[12]

The kings were also taught कूटयुद्धविधि (the art of guerrilla warfare, the various tricks and devices whereby an enemy can be taken at a disadvantage).[13]

As a rule, therefore, the princes were well-tutored in arts and sciences including the science of warfare and political strategy.[14]

Personal bravery, proficiency in archery, and the use of the अस्त्र were essential qualifications in kings. The kings of the Raghu race were supermen in this respect and Purañjaya the progenitor of that great dynasty was reputed to have ridden Indra himself in the form of a bull in order to destroy the entire hordes of demons and hence he came to be named Kakutstha and his descendants

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9. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 30 :
धियः समग्रैः स गुणैरुदारधीः क्रमाच्चतस्रश्चतुरर्णवोपमाः ।
ततार विद्याः पवनातिपातिभिर्दिशो हरिद्भिर्हरितामिवेश्वरः ॥
Raghuvaṁśa I. 19 : शास्त्रेष्वकुण्ठिता बुद्धिः ।
„ I. 23 : विद्यानां पारदृश्वनः ।
10. „ III. 31 : अशिक्षतास्त्रं पितुरेव मन्त्रवत् ।
11. „ VIII. 21 : षणवन्धमुखान् षड् गुणान् ।
12. *Śākuntala* V. 25 : परातिसंधानमधीयते यैर्विद्येति ते सन्तु किलाप्तवाचः ।
13. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 69 :
कूटयुद्धविधिज्ञेऽपि तस्मिन्सन्मार्गयोधिनि ।
भेजेऽभिसारिकावृत्तिं जयश्रीर्वीरगामिनी ॥
14. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 68 :
इति क्रमात्प्रयुञ्जानो राजनीतिं चतुर्विधाम् (साम, दान, दण्ड, भेद) ।

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Kākutsthas. The supreme self-abnegation and bravery of Dilīpa was testified in his encounter with the illusory lion in Canto II of *Raghuvaṁśa*. Raghu's fight with Indra himself in Canto III marks him out as a matchless warrior as also his दिग्विजय (world-conquest) in Canto IV. Prince Aja's single-handed fight with the combined might of all the other princes gathered together on the occasion of the Svayaṁvara of Indumatī described in Canto VII was a feat worthy of an Ikṣvāku prince. Daśaratha's wonderful hunting exploits, Rāma's conquest of the terrible, resistless and relentless Paraśurāma, as well as his breaking of Śiva's bow, his killing of mighty demons like Triśira, Khara, Dūṣana when he was a mere boy and later on his successful fight with the world-conquering Rāvaṇa which finally and completely broke the resistance of the aborigines and made the Aryan race supreme in the whole of India, thus raising him (Rāma) to the rank of divinity with the Indians, Kuśa's help to Indra in his fight against the formidable enemy Durjaya—all these incidents lovingly described by our great poet are intended to portray an ideal king and an absolute and all-powerful ruler.

Duṣyanta the hero of *Śākuntala* also waged a successful war with the demons at the behest of Indra, and Purūravas restored to Indra the fascinating Urvaśī who was abducted by the demon Keśin when she was returning from Kubera's palace.

Figurative and ornamental heads of "limited monarchies" may not require these supreme manly qualities for obvious reasons.

On the whole, the principle that the king was a trustee and guardian of the people was fully recognized. The position of the king was therefore not a bed of roses and was not considered as affording a favourable opportunity for pleasures or enjoyment.[15]

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15. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVIII. 18 :

सुखानि सोऽभुङ्क्त सुखोपरोधि वृत्तं हि राज्ञामुपरुद्धवृत्तम् ।

Śākuntala V. 7 : स्वसुखनिरभिलाषः खिद्यसे लोकहेतोः ।

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THE KINGLY OBSESSION FOR YAJÑAS

During the period under consideration, the Yajñas or sacrifices had attained an importance in the social and religious life of the people which to the modern mind may well appear as somewhat crazy and fantastic. A good king was expected to perform his due share of the sacrificial celebrations. The kings of the Raghu race are said to have kept the sacrificial fires burning according to the prescribed ritual. Dilīpa is stated to have milked the earth, i.e., collected taxes for the purpose of celebrating sacrifices.[16] He completed ninety-nine sacrifices and while performing the hundredth was met with a stern opposition from Indra who did not desire his well-known and exclusive title of Śatakratu (the performer of one hundred sacrifices) to be whisked away from him or shared with him by a mere mortal however mighty he may have been. Raghu, after his father, conquered all the neighbouring princes, performed the Viśvajit sacrifice and gave away to deserving mendicants all the colossal wealth he possessed and had acquired by right of conquest, reserving to himself only earthern vessels for his own use.[17] In Canto VI of *Raghuvaṁśa* when describing the Magadha king, Sunandā observes that he had retuced Śacī (Indra's wife) to the condition of a *proṣitabhartṛkā* (grass widow) by constantly requisitioning Indra's presence in Ayodhyā at the celebration of innumerable sacrifices.[18] Anūparāja is described in the same canto as one who had planted sacrificial posts in the eighteen द्वीपs

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16. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 26 : दुदोह गां स यज्ञाय

" I. 44 : ग्रामेष्वात्मविसृष्टेषु यूपचिह्नेषु यज्वनाम् ।

" IX. 20 : कनकयूपसमुच्छ्रयशोभिनो वितमसा तमसासरयूतटाः ।

17. " IV. 86 :

स विश्वजितमाजह्रे यज्ञं सर्वस्वदक्षिणम् ।
आदानं हि विसर्गाय सतां वारिमुचामिव ॥

18. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 23 :

शय्याश्रियं पाण्डुकपोललम्बान्मन्दारशून्यानलकांश्चकार

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(divisions of the world).[19] Suṣeṇa is extolled as a *yajvan*. The Pāṇḍya king is said to have been felicitated by sage Agastya after his sacrificial bath.[20] In Canto IX Daśaratha is said to have fixed golden sacrificial posts along the banks of the Tamasā and the Śarayū[21] and also performed the sacrifice prescribed for the birth of a son.[22] In Canto XV Rāma also is stated to have performed the Aśvamedha Yajña.

In *Mālavikāgnimitra* Puṣpamitra the celebrated king of Malwa is stated to have performed Rājayajña (which is the same as Aśvamedha) and invited his son Agnimitra with his queen to attend the celebrations.[23]

From this overweening enthusiasm for Yajñas we are disposed to support the theory that Kālidāsa must have lived in the period when the influence of the Brāhmaṇa literature was at its height with the classes as well as the masses, before the Christian Era.

It appears also that the kings had a sacred repository or asylum for the holy family fire where it was kept constantly burning, and which was styled अग्निशरण.[24]

It is a happy consummation that this craze after sacrificial celebration has now completely died down. Although until recently there were many wealthy Hindu potentates in India, none of them thought it necessary to celebrate sacrifices at great pomp and expense for the well-being of their subjects. The belief that Indra will not send rain to fructify the earth unless sacrifices were duly performed has ceased to hold sway in the present so-called materialistic and rationalistic age.

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19. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 38 : अष्टादशद्वीपनिखातयूपः ।

20. „ VI. 61.

21. „ IX. 20 : कनकयूपसमुच्छ्रयशोभिनो वितमसा तमसासरयूतटाः।

22. „ X. 50 : पुत्रकामेष्टियज्ञ ।

23. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act V, p. 102.

24. *Śākuntala* Act V, p. 156.

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STATIC CONDITION OF SOCIETY

The prime duty of the king in ancient India was to maintain the static condition of society as established by the laws of Manu and other patriarchal sages.[25] The चातुर्वर्ण्यव्यवस्था (division of society into four Varṇas, castes or divisions, with duties and inhibitions prescribed for each class) was the very spinal chord of society and the kings were required to take the utmost care that there was no deviation or departure from the trodden path, that the established order of social life went on smoothly without clash or conflict, and that no revolutionary or disruptive ideas took root to unsettle the mind of the people. This policy of hard and fast regimentation and rigorous discipline which stifled free thought and action to a certain extent and mercilessly differentiated between one class and another cannot find favour in the present democratic or socialistic age but it may be readily conceded that it was not without its advantages in those times.

The greatest compliment therefore which could be given to a ruler in ancient India was that he sternly set his face against any revolutionary change and kept all classes and castes within their prescribed bounds. This sentiment finds echo in many places throughout the works of Kālidāsa. In Canto XV of *Raghuvaṁśa,* the incident of Śambūka's decapitation by Rāma for no other crime than the former's practising penance although he was a Śudra, throws a lurid light on the mentality of the people of those times.[26] तपश्चर्या or practising penance was the monopoly of the Brahmins and could at the most be extended by courtesy to the other twice-born classes, viz., the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas, but no further. In Canto IX of *Raghuvaṁśa,* Śrāvaṇa who was

25. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 17 :
रेखामात्रमपि क्षुण्णादा मनोर्वर्त्मनः परम् ।
न व्यतीयुः प्रजास्तस्य नियन्तुर्नेमिवृत्तयः ॥

26. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 47 :
राजन्प्रजासु ते कश्चिदपचारः प्रवर्तते ।
तमन्विष्य प्रशमयेर्भवितासि ततः कृती ॥

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accidentally killed by Daśaratha is described as the son of a non-Brahmin ascetic. He probably belonged to the Vaiśya class.[27] In Act IV of *Śākuntala* Śārṅgarava pays the king the compliment that he was scrupulously maintaining the established condition of society (अभिन्नस्थितिः) and that even a person of the lowest class under his rule does not go astray from the beaten path.[28] Brahmins especially attributed great weight to this quality in a king, being themselves a highly privileged class.

In v. 22 of Act V of *Vikramorvaśīya* the word स्थितिमत् is used in the same sense as above, i.e., one who does not allow the orthodox condition of society to be disturbed in the least.[29]

Powerful kings in those days led vast armies to conquer and subjugate their neighbours. But the motive force behind these conquests was not territorial acquisition. The Raghu kings conquered for the sake of glory[30] and booty also. The king is described in Canto IV as अनम्राणां समुद्धर्ता, the uprooter or destroyer of the arrogant, i.e. of those who refused allegiance to him.[31] The king Raghu subjugated his enemies (made them fall flat on the ground before him) and thereafter reinstated them on their thrones (replanted them) like the कलमs—a species of rice plants—which do not bear fruit unless pulled out and transplated elsewhere.[32] The conquerors of course forced the conquered to disgorge wealth in various forms which they (the conquerors) considered their legitimate booty. On account of this established convention which was rarely departed from, the kingdoms in old India retained their regional limits and integrity although somewhat financially crippled by the conquest.

27. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 76.

28. *Śākuntala* V. 10 :
महाभागः कामं नरपतिरभिन्नस्थितिरहो ।
न कश्चिद्वर्णानामपथमपकृष्टोऽपि भजते ॥

29. *Vikramorvaśīya* V. 22 : स्थितिमति च विभक्ता त्वय्यनाकम्प्यधैर्ये ।

30. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 7 : यशसे विजिगीषूणां ।

31. „ IV. 35.

32. „ IV. 37.

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This code of honour which as a rule was observed by great and good kings prevented them from doing any further harm to a vanquished enemy who surrendered himself after a fair fight.[33] The Pāṇḍya kings presented Raghu with priceless pearls extracted from the Tāmraparṇī river[34], the kings of अपरान्त (Konkan) with countless wealth[35] and the king of Kamarūpa with giant elephants[36].

After vanquishing the rest of the princes, Raghu respectfully invited them to attend the Viśvajit sacrifice and gave them such magnificent treatment, that the rankling wound of defeat at his hands was apparently healed and forgotten.[37]

In Canto IX, Daśaratha is also represented to have taken compassion on the orphaned sons of his enemies when they were made to prostrate themselves before him and returned leaving them in peaceful possession of their ancestral kingdoms.[38]

In *Mālavikāgnimitra* king Agnimitra after conquering Yajñasena in a fair fight divided the Vidarbha kingdom in two parts with the Varadā river as the common boundary and gave one part to the conquered Yajñasena and the other to his cousin Mādhavasena (the brother of Mālavikā). He had no thought of annexation.[39] Comparatively speaking the old potentates of India were more chivalrous and

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33. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 64 : प्रणिपातप्रतीकारः संरम्भो हि महात्मनाम् ।
34. „ IV. 50.
35. „ IV. 58.
36. „ IV. 83 :
तमीशः कामरूपाणामत्याखण्डलविक्रमम् ।
भेजे भिन्नकटैर्नागैरन्यानुपरुरोध यैः ॥
37. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 87 :
सत्रान्ते सचिवसखः पुरस्क्रियाभिर्गुर्वीभिः शमितपराजयव्यलीकान्
काकुत्स्थश्चिरविरहोत्सुकावरोधान् राजन्यान्स्वपुरनिवृत्तयेऽनुमेने ॥
38. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 14 :
निवृत्ते स महार्णवरोधसः सचिवकारितबालसुताञ्जलीन् ।
समनुकम्प्य सपत्नपरिग्रहाननलकाननलकाननवमां पुरीम् ।
39. *Mālavikāgnimitra* V. 13.

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generous in dealing with their enemies than their counterparts of our own so-called more civilized times.

The revenue and income of the king which was necessary to enable him to govern his people came mainly from four sources, viz. (1) taxes, (2) voluntary gifts from merchants and other rich subjects, (3) spoils of war, and (4) property escheated to the king for want of heirs.

TAXES

The mode of taxation was very simple and efficacious. Subjects were required to pay to the king one-sixth of their cumulative income. There was no exception to this rule. Even ascetics and anchorites living in the jungle were bound to make over to the king one-sixth of the corn which they gathered there. The ascetics also were supposed to present the king with one-sixth of their religious merit in addition to the usual contribution in the shape of corn.[40] The chief consideration for this tax was the protection of the subjects for which the king was responsible. It appears that the king in return of the payment of this tax was bound to educate the people and feed such of them as were destitute and protect them in all ways.[41]

In v. 4 of Act V of *Śākuntala* the king is called षष्ठांशवृत्ति i.e. one who lives on the one-sixth part of the income of his subjects.[42]

In Canto V of *Raghuvaṁśa* a reference occurs to this one-sixth portion which is the fixed share of the king. It

40. *Śākuntala* Act II, p. 76 :

राजा—चिन्तय तावत्केनापदेशेन सकृदप्याश्रमे वसामः ।
विदूषकः—कोऽपरोऽपदेशस्तव राज्ञः । नीवारषष्ठभागमस्माकमुपहरन्त्विति ।
राजा—मूर्ख, अन्यद्भागधेयमेतेषां रक्षणे निपतति, यद्रत्नराशीनपि विहायाभिनन्द्यम्
(तपःषड्भागमक्षय्यम्) ।

41. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 24 :

प्रजानां विनयाधानाद्रक्षणाद्भरणादपि ।
स पिता पितरस्तासां केवलं जन्महेतवः ॥

42. *Śākuntala* V. 4 : षष्ठांशवृत्तेरपि धर्म एषः ।

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appears that the hermits kept corn due to the share of the king on the banks of the holy streams adjoining their hermitages and the officers of the king used to collect it in due course.[43] On collecting the taxes according to the simple and unobnoxious method above referred to, the good kings used to spend the amount thereby collected wholly for the good of their subjects, just as the sun by his rays draws up to the skies the water of the ocean only for the purpose of pouring it down a thousand times for the fructification of the earth.[44] The illustration is very apt and expressive. There is no reference to any other tax in Kālidāsian literature.

PRESENTS FROM THE RICH

There is a clear reference in *Vikramorvaśīya* Act IV to valuable presents made by rich merchants to their king. The mountains pouring down torrents of rain water on the plains are compared by Purūravas to rich merchants pouring down wealth at the feet of their king.[45] These offerings or donations appear to be purely voluntary on the part of merchants or rich people with a view to secure the royal favour or a seat of honour in the royal assembly. Such presents however may have been a source of considerable income to the king.

THE LAW OF ESCHEAT

The third source of income was the right of the king to inherit the property of an heirless person.[46] It appears that the device of disposing property by will was unknown at this time. Disposition of property by will was known

43. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 8 : तान्युञ्छषष्ठाङ्कितसैकतानि शिवानि वस्तीर्थजलानि कञ्चित् ।

44. „ I. 18.

45. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 13 : धारासारोपनयनपरा नैगमाः सानुमन्तः ।

46. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 219 : सार्थवाहो धनमित्रो नाम नौव्यसने विपन्नः अनपत्यश्च किल तपस्वी । राजगामी तस्यार्थसंचय इत्येतदमात्येन लिखितम् ।

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to Mahomedans from early times and Mahomedan law provides for such disposition to the extent of one-third of the property. Among the Hindus, wills appear to have come in vogue in the time of the Peshwas and were known by the name of Vyavasthāpatra. The king therefore being the ultimate heir, this right was a prolific source of income to the royal treasury. The custom of taking a son in adoption was very probably not known at the time of Kālidāsa as such a custom finds no reference in his writings.

ACQUISITIVE INVASIONS

There was another recognized way to replenishing the royal treasury and it consisted in attacking neighbouring princes and thus winning spoils of war.

The commencement of the autumnal season was considered the best time when princes of an aggressive temperament or those whose treasury was depleted left their domains to raid their neighbour's territories.[47] At about that time the rivers became fordable and the roads free of mud. Another object of these incursions into foreign territory was to keep the restless army engaged and to preserve its fighting morale. The present observations of the Dasara day with semi-military processions, which is its main feature, is a relic of the old warlike times when kings moved out of their borders to seek booty from adjoining territories. Right down to the times of the Peshwas and Maratha chieftains like Shinde and Holker this custom of moving out the armies in search of spoils of war appears to have been in vogue. Lethal weapons such as swords, guns, scimitars are still worshipped on the Dasara day and worship of the horses on that day is a crude form of the more elaborate ritual of वाजिनीराजना (horse worship) performed in ancient times.[48]

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47. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 24 :
सरितः कुर्वती गाधाः पथश्चाश्यानकर्दमान् ।
यात्रायै चोदयामास तं शक्तेः प्रथमं शरत् ॥

48. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 25 : तस्मै सम्यग्घुतो वह्निर्वाजिनीराजनाविधौ ।

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THE ENTOURAGE AND EQUIPMENTS OF THE KING

In v. 60 of Canto I of *Raghuvaṁśa* the seven important limbs or organs of kingship are enumerated as follows: (1) the king himself (स्वामिन्), (2) ministers (अमात्यऽ), (3) friends and relations (सुहृद्ऽ), (4) treasury (कोश), (5) kingdom or territories (राष्ट्र), (6) fortresses (दुर्ग), and (7) the army (बलानि).[49]

Every king had a सचिव or अमात्य (chief minister) and मन्त्रिन्ऽ (ministers or councillors).[50] Sometimes the poet appears to use सचिव, अमात्य and मन्त्रिन् almost in the same sense. The assembly of councillors spoken of in Act V of *Mālavikāgnimitra* is referred to both as मन्त्रिपरिषद् and अमात्यपरिषद्.[51] It is difficult to say whether the functions and duties of the अमात्य, सचिव and मन्त्रिन्ऽ were clearly defined and demarcated. In v. 12 of Canto XII of *Raghuvaṁśa* the word मौल is interpreted by Mallinātha to mean आप्त or सचिव.[52] आप्तऽ in all probability were the सुहृद्ऽ being the 3rd अङ्ग or limb of the kings; very old and faithful अमात्यऽ may by courtesy be classed as सुहृद्ऽ.[53]

The functions of these ministers appear to be mainly advisory and the last word of final decision came from the king. In *Śākuntala* the अमात्य advises the escheat of the estate of the deceased Dhanamitra and is very properly

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49. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 60 : उपपन्नं ननु शिवं सप्तस्वङ्गेषु यस्य मे।

50. „ IX. 14 : सचिवकारितबालसुताञ्जलीन्।

51. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act V, p. 100 :
कञ्चुकी—देव, एवममात्यपरिषदे निवेदयामि।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act V, p. 101 : राजा—तेन हि मन्त्रिपरिषदं ब्रूहि।

52. *Raghuvaṁśa* XII. 12 :
अथानाथाः प्रकृतयो मातृबन्धुनिवासिनम्।
मौलैरानाययामासुर्भरतं स्तम्भिताश्रुभिः॥

53. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 66 :
वृद्धैरमात्यैः सह चीरवासा मामर्घ्यपाणिर्भरतोऽभ्युपैति।
Raghuvaṁśa XIII. 71 :
श्मश्रुप्रवृद्धिजननाननविक्रियांश्च प्लक्षान्प्ररोहजटिलानिव मन्त्रिवृद्धान्।

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overruled by the king. In *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act V the council of ministers seeks the mandate of the king and when such mandate is conveyed to the ministers, they express their agreement with it. It does not appear therefore that the king's autocratic powers were materially affected or circumscribed by the voice of the ministers. In Canto XIV of *Raghuvaṁśa* in taking such a momentous decision as the exiling of the reigning queen Rāma does not think it worth his while to consult his ministers or any one of them.

On occasions of great crisis or in difficult situations the voice of the मौलs (old trusted ministers or king's relations) had great weight. Old age in the councillors naturally added to their influence and importance.[54]

It is stated that the king Atithi had daily consultations on the affairs of the state with his councillors (मन्त्रिन्ऽ). The proceedings of such meetings were always kept a dead secret.[55]

In those days India was governed by many princes who were openly or secretly hostile to one another except perhaps when their families were connected by marriage. The royal throne therefore could not be allowed to remain vacant for long without inviting an attack from adjoining monarchs. Even enthroning a baby king as in Canto XVII of *Raghuvaṁśa* or a pregnant queen as in the last canto (XIX) may for the time being serve as a security against foreign aggression.[56]

It was for this reason that when king Agnivarṇa died, he was hastily cremated within the precincts of the palace with a view to keep the news of his death a close secret

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54. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 57 :
मौलैः साधं स्थविरसचिवैर्हैमसिंहासनस्था राज्ञी राज्यं विधिवदशिषद्भर्तुरव्याहताज्ञा।

55. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 50 :
मन्त्रः प्रतिदिनं तस्य बभूव सह मन्त्रिभिः।
स जातु सेव्यमानोऽपि गुप्तद्वारो न सूच्यते ॥

56. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 55 :
तैः कृतप्रकृतिमुख्यसंग्रहैराशु तस्य सहधर्मचारिणी।
साधु दृष्टशुभगर्भलक्षणा प्रत्यपद्यत नराधिपश्रियम् ॥

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at least for some time. The ministers immediately called together the leading men among the subjects and in consultation with them placed the pregnant queen on the throne. Similarly when the king was lingering between life and death the मन्त्रिन्s are stated to have spread the rumour that he was engaged in performing the prescribed rites for the birth of a son, so that there should not be needless panic among the people.[57]

The मन्त्रिन्s, सचिवs and अमात्यs were therefore the main props of the State and were the second line of defence and protection of the subjects after the king himself.

ROYAL PRECEPTOR

Next in importance is the राजगुरु, the royal preceptor or the spiritual head of the State. Dilīpa in Canto I of *Raghuvaṁśa,* despondent as to the birth of a lawful heir to his kingdom, appeals to his spiritual preceptor for help. Religion in those days permeated and pervaded the entire life of the people in all its spheres, and the Rājaguru or Purohita was a living force and not an ornamental figure-head as he is now. Janaka sent his *purohita* to Ayodhyā to bring Daśaratha to Mithilā to attend the marriage of his (Daśaratha's) sons.[58] Daśaratha, who on his way back from Mithilā to Ayodhyā was pursued by evil omens, consulted his *guru* or preceptor who assured him that although the portents indicated a calamity, it would have, however, a pleasant ending.[59] Great was the reverence in which the preceptor was held even by powerful kings.[60]

In *Śākuntala* Act V where Duṣyanta whose memory regarding his relations with Śakuntalā was completely wiped out owing to the curse of Durvāsas and who felt puzzled by the apparently sincere grief of Śakuntalā,

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57. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 52 : बाढमेष दिवसेषु पार्थिवः कर्म साधयति पुत्रजन्मने ।
58. " XI. 49.
59. " XI. 62.
60. " I. 60-64.

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referred the vexed question of her relationship with himself to his *purohita* who advised him to allow Śakuntalā to remain in the palace until the birth of her child.[61]

THE GENERAL

It appears that as a rule the king himself was the general of his armies. Raghu (Canto IV), Aja (Canto VII) and Daśaratha (Canto IX) waged wars in their time, but led the armies in person and there is no mention of any Senāpati other than themselves. In those days it was not safe for a king to entrust the control of the army to another person howsoever brave and efficient he was. Sometimes the Senāpati killed and imprisoned the king and usurped the throne as in the case of the famous Puṣpamitra who even after he ascended the throne stuck to the title of Senāpati.[62] Senānī[63] appears to be a designation inferior in rank to Senāpati. Vīrasena, Agnimitra's brother-in-law was his Senānī. Rāma also, in his fight with Rāvaṇa, did not entrust the control of the armies to another.

In *Śākuntala* Act II when Duṣyanta was on a hunting expedition, he had a Senāpati with him, but he appears to be only a military officer temporarily in charge of his military escort. In *Kumārasambhava* Kumāra was installed with proper ceremonial as the Senāpati of the celestial army.[64]

THE VAITĀLIKAS AND CĀRAṆAS

The Vaitālikas and Cāraṇas occupied a place of honour in the royal entourage. They apear to be persons of considerable erudition and poetical attainments. At stated

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61. *Śākuntala* Act V, p. 179.

62. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act V, p. 102 :
सेनापतिः पुष्पमित्रो वैदिशस्थं पुत्रमायुष्मन्तमग्निमित्रं स्नेहात्परिष्वज्येदमनुदर्शयति।

63. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act V, p. 101 :
सेनान्ये वीरसेनाय लिख्यतामेवं क्रियतामिति ।

64. *Kumārasambhava* XIII. 50 :
आनन्दकल्लोलितमानसं तं समभ्यषिञ्चन्पृतनाधिपत्ये ।

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intervals of the day and on special occasions these bards eulogized the king which eulogies were mostly composed or improvised by themselves. The object of these professional eulogists was not only to glorify the king, but put new life and courage in him, when he felt exhausted and weary with the arduous duties of his highly responsible office.[65] These bards were a time-honoured institution and an index to the high level of the civilization which marked those times.

It may be unhesitatingly stated that in the works of Kālidāsa, highlights and rare specimens of poetical craftsmanship are placed in the mouth of these bards. Conspicuous among these is the glorious poetical effusion poured out by the bards to wake up the prince Aja on the morn of the Svayaṁvara day of the princess Indumatī.[66] There is a tradition that these ten verses (Canto VII. 66-74) were composed by Goddess Sarasvatī herself and presented to Kālidāsa. Even Kālidāsa rarely attained to such a giddy height of delicate poetical fancy, supreme elegance of phrase and arresting musical rhythm as in these matchless verses. There are only ten of them but to a student of Kālidāsa they are unforgettable. Each verse embodies a rare gem of gossamer poetical fancy expressed in a unique setting of phrase and rhythm. Other specimens which richly deserve particular notice are: *Śākuntala* V. 7-8; *Mālavikāgnimitra* II. 12 and V. 1-2; and *Vikramorvaśīya* V. 21-22.

SŪTAPUTRAS OR KULĀDHĪŚAS

Allied to these Cāraṇas and Vaitālikas are Sūtaputras or Kulādhīśas. They are also referred to as Vaitālikas in v. 3 of Canto XVI of *Kumārasambhava*. These bards were conversant with the genealogy and history of every ruling house and even when the battle raged at its height they fearlessly moved about the battlefield and loudly sang out

65. *Śākuntala* Act V, p. 159 : एते क्लान्तमनसः पुनर्नवीकृताः स्मः ।
66. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 66–74.

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the names and past exploits of well-known and highborn warriors engaged on both the opposing sides with a view to goad them to greater efforts. It was the unwritten law of warfare that they were not to be harmed on any account, and the rule was strictly observed.

THE KAÑCUKIN

The next picturesque and venerable figure holding an important place of honour in the royal household is the Kañcukin. The name is derived from *kañcuka* meaning the peculiar robe of his office. Usually he was a Brahmin grown old in the service of the king. He was placed in charge of the king's seraglio (अन्तःपुर). His pious disposition, long faithful service and declining years befit him for the onerous responsibilities and the great confidence of his office. The kings' harems in those days, as stated elsewhere, were veritable hot-beds of intrigues and jealousies and are aptly described by the poet as अन्तःपुरकालकूट, i.e., veritable plague spots.[67] This office therefore required for its proper discharge great tact, patience and circumspection. The Kañcukin is always addressed by the dignified appellation of Ārya[68] (your reverence). Having passed the major part of his life in the difficult and trying environments of the royal household the Kañcukin is as a rule a practical philosopher and has often given expression to shrewd observations about his precarious and exacting duties and the general tenor of his unenviable life.[69] In v. 1 of Act III of *Vikramorvaśīya* he bitterly complains that his service is only another name of a life sentence of rigorous imprisonment and that exercising control and keeping order among

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67. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 218 :
यदि भवानन्तःपुरकालकूटान्मोक्ष्यते तदा मां मेघप्रतिच्छन्दे प्रासादे शब्दापय।

68. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act V, p. 125 :
राजा—(लातव्यं प्रति) आर्य, जानाति भवान्कस्यायं बाण इति।

69. *Vikramorvaśīya* III. 1, 2 and 3.
Śākuntala V. 3, 4 and 5.
Mālavikāgnimitra V. 14, 17.

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the ladies of the harem was an extremely difficult task. The Kañcukin in short is a modern palace chamberlain with this important difference that modern palaces have no harems except in the case of Mahomedans who usually employ eunuchs to keep watch and ward over the ladies.

The Kañcukin is not only a high caste person but is highly erudite, learned and uses polished language and mixes in conversation even with the king and other members of the royal family on almost equal terms.[70]

THE CHARIOTEER

It will be a mistake to suppose that the charioteer was a mere inferior servant. During active warfare, he was the chief coadjutor and lieutenant of the warrior whose success depended not a little on the charioteer's skill in managing and manoeuvring the horses. The word सारथ्य therefore in popular parlance has come to mean "valuable help or support". Lord Kṛṣṇa was not ashamed to act as the charioteer of his friend Arjuna. King Śalya at the special entreaty of Duryodhana undertook to drive the chariot of Karṇa in the latter's last mortal fight with Arjuna. A well-known incident during the Mahābhārata war shows the importance of an efficient charioteer at a critical moment. Arjuna had incurred the bitter enmity of Takṣaka the terrible serpent, who with a view to avenge himself took the form of a deadly arrow and entered the quiver of Karṇa; when Karṇa discharged that arrow at Arjuna, off sped Takṣaka to make an end of Arjuna. Kṛṣṇa, however, saw the danger and so manoeuvred the horses that instead of chopping off Arjuna's head, the arrow splintered his crown (किरीट) into fragments and thus Arjuna was saved. In *Uttararāmacarita,* Sumantra the old venerable charioteer of the Raghu's royal house was driving the chariot of Candraketu (the son of Lakṣmaṇa) and so great was the respect in which he was held that Candraketu before

70. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act V, p. 125 :
नामाङ्कितो दृश्यते । किन्तु न मे वर्णविभावसहा दृष्टिः ।

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encountering the formidable Lava, touches the former's feet and seeks his blessings. The charioteer also like the Kañcukin is usually a high class person. In *Śākuntala* the charioteer claiming the right of an elderly person addresses Duṣyanta as आयुष्मन् (long-lived one).[71] It was necessary for a charioteer to have complete knowledge of the temper and habits of the horses (अश्वहृदय).

THE JESTER

No dramatic piece can be complete without a jester. He is the Indian "Falstaff". He is reputed to be a gourmand[72], and is as a rule an ugly person[73] and a blockhead.[74] The Vidūṣaka who was present in court when Śakuntalā was disowned by the king and who knew that in Kaṇva's hermitage the king was madly in love with Śakuntalā, could have tried to save the situation by reminding the king in time of his past relations with the girl, but being a dense-headed person (मृत्पिण्डबुद्धि) he implicitly believed the king's statement to him on a previous occasion that he (the king) was not at all serious about the anchorite girl and that he (Vidūṣaka) should dismiss the subject from his mind as a mere joke. The king's motive at the time was to prevent the babbling fool from prematurely spreading the report about his fresh love entanglement among the inmates of his harem. Thus it was the stupidity of the Vidūṣaka which enabled Kālidāsa to keep up the consistency and impeccability of his plot. The Vidūṣaka is invariably a Brahmin who is ever on the alert for presents of sweet-

71. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 17 :
आयुष्मन् उद्घातिनी भूमिरिति रश्मिसंयमनाद्व्यस्य मन्दीकृतो वेगः।

72. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act III, p. 66 :
राजा—सर्वत्रौदरिकस्याभ्यवहार्यमेव विषयः।
Śākuntala Act II, p. 62 :
विदूषकः—किं मोदकखण्डिकायाम्। तेन ह्ययं सुगृहीतः क्षणः।

73. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act V, p. 129 :
विदूषकः—किमिति शङ्किष्यते। नन्वाश्रमवासपरिचित एव शाखामृगः।

74. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 200 : मयापि मृत्पिण्डबुद्धिना तथैव गृहीतम्।

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meats (वायन) from the queens or members of the royal family on religious occasions. His duty, however, is to assist his royal friend in the acquisition of fresh female beauty and youth which generally appears to be a dominant princely hobby at the time.

We have stated that the Vidūṣaka was usually a block-head but Kālidāsa has provided a conspicuous exception to this rule in the Vidūṣaka of *Mālavikāgnimitra*. There, he is the chief wirepuller of the plot. Among the three Vidūṣakas of Kālidāsa's creation he is the only living and vital figure. It was he who cleverly plotted to exhibit Mālavikā, who was carefully and jealously guarded by the queen Dhāriṇī, to the greedy gaze of the pleasure-loving king, practically stripped of all superfluous clothing to enable her to give a suitable dancing performance. This much-desired consummation he has achieved by setting by the ears the conceited music teachers in the service of the royal household, one of whom, Haradatta, is Mālavikā's teacher. Later on, when goaded by the jealous queen Irāvatī, Dhāriṇī throws Mālavikā into prison with a strict order that she was not to be released except on presentation of her signet ring, this wily Brahmin pretends to be bitten by a deadly cobra and in order to effect his cure Dhāriṇī is induced to part with her serpent-shaped ring avowedly to enable Dhruvasiddhi the physician to perform उदकुम्भविधान (the rite where jars filled with water are requisitioned for curing a serpent-bite). The ring is used for the liberation of Mālavikā. The Vidūṣaka after Mālavikā's release brings about her union with the king.

The Vidūṣaka is a privileged person in the royal palace and has access everywhere.

He is however a loyal and affectionate friend and does his utmost to satisfy the amorous whims of the king. He is the repository of the king's love-confidences which he sometimes naïvely divulges owing to his inborn gullibility as in Act II of *Vikramorvaśīya*.[75]

The Vidūṣaka is gifted with a certain broad humour

75. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act II, p. 29.

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which often enlivens conversation or happily relieves the tension on serious occasions.[76] Sometimes his witticisms are caustic or sarcastic.[77]

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76. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act I, p. 16 :
उपस्थिता देवी पीठमर्दिकां पण्डितकौशिकीं पुरस्कृत्य ।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act I, p. 17 :
भवति, पश्याम उरभ्रसंवादम् । किं मुधा वेतनदानेन ।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act II, p. 33 : विषणिकन्दुरिव मे हृदयाभ्यन्तरं दह्यते ।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act II, p. 33 :
भवानपि सूनापरिसरचर इव गृध्र आमिषलोलुपो भीरुकश्च ।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act III, p. 42 :
एतत्खलु सीधुपानोद्वेजितस्य मत्स्यण्डिकोपनता ।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act III, p. 60 :
यावदङ्गारको राशिमिवानुवक्रं प्रतिगमनं न करोति ।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act IV, p. 64 :
निगडपद्यावदष्टसूर्पपादं नागकन्यके इव पातालवासमनुभवतः ।

77. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act II, p. 56 :
लोप्त्रेण गृहीतस्य कुम्भीरकस्यास्ति वा प्रतिवचनम् ।
Vikramorvaśīya Act II, p. 58 :
न खल्वक्षिदुःखितस्य प्रमुखे दीपशिखां सहते ।
Vikramorvaśīya Act III, p. 77 :
छिन्नहस्तः पुरतो वध्ये पलायिते भणति—' गच्छ धर्मो भविष्यति ' इति ।
Vikramorvaśīya Act III, p. 81 : भवति, किं वा स्वर्गे स्मर्तव्यम् । न तत्र खाद्यते न पीयते । केवलमनिमिषैरक्षिभिर्मीनतावलम्ब्यते ।
Śākuntala Act II, p. 59 : कुतः किल स्वयमक्ष्याकुलीकृत्याश्रुकारणं पृच्छसि ।
Śākuntala Act II, p. 65 : अत्रभवान्प्रकृतिमापन्नः । त्वं तावदटवीतोऽटवीमाहिण्डमानो नरनासिकालोलुपस्य जीर्णऋक्षस्य कस्यापि मुखे पतिष्यसि ।
Śākuntala Act II, p. 70 : यथा कस्यापि पिण्डखर्जूरैरुद्वेजितस्य तिन्तिण्यामभिलाषो भवेत्, तथा स्त्रीरत्नपरिभाविनो भवत इयमभ्यर्थना ।
Śākuntala Act II, p. 73 : तेन हि लघु परित्रायतामेनां भवान् । मा कस्यापि तपस्विन इङ्गुदीतैलमिश्रचिक्कगशीर्षस्य हस्ते पतिष्यति ।
Śākuntala Act VI, p. 199 : तिष्ठ तावत् । अनेन दण्डकाष्ठेन कन्दर्पव्याधिं (चूताङ्कुरं) नाशयिष्यामि ।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act II, p. 25 : उपस्थितं नयनमधु संनिहितमक्षिकं च ।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act V, p. 105 : एष लोकव्यवहारः सर्वो नववरो लज्जातुरो भवतीति ।
Vikramorvaśīya Act II, p. 32 : एवं मया जिह्वा संयन्त्रिता येन भवतोऽपि नास्ति प्रतिवचनम् ।

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The description of the royal hunt by the Vidūṣaka at the beginning of Act II of *Śākuntala* though brief is remarkably vivid and realistic.

GREEK WOMEN

There is a reference to Greek (Ionian) women attendants on the king.[78] So also king Purūravas is described in v. 3 of Act III of *Vikramorvaśīya* as being attended by maids holding lighted lamps in their hands. Greek women appear to have been employed by kings to carry about their bows and arrows. It is difficult to understand why Greek women should have been chosen for that purpose.

THE SPY

The spy is a necessary concomitant especially of one man's rule. Such a ruler must always be in full possession of information as to what his subjects say about him and his doings. Such spies were ordered to keep watch not only on hostile persons but even on relations and friends. The spies themselves were unknown to one another and unknowingly carried on espionage against one another.[79] The kings in those times maintained a regular network of spies. Therefore they were called चारचक्षुषः (whose eyes were spies).[80]

It appears that those spies although their occupation to all appearances was despicable enough, appear as a rule to be men of high integrity and trustworthiness. In Canto XIV of *Raghuvaṁśa* Rāma is represented as questioning a

78. *Śākuntala* Act II, p. 57 :
वाणासनहस्ताभिर्यवनीभिर्वनपुष्पमालाधारिणीभिः परिवृत इत एवागच्छति ।

79. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 51 :
परेषु स्वेषु च क्षिप्तैरविज्ञातपरस्परैः ।
सोऽपसर्पैर्जजागार यथाकालं स्वपन्नपि ॥

80. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 48 :
न तस्य मण्डले राज्ञो न्यस्तप्रणिधिदीधितेः ।
अदृष्टमभवत्किंचिद्व्यभ्रस्येव विवस्वतः ॥

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spy named Bhadramukha as to what his subjects say about him. After being steadily importuned the spy reluctantly informed Rāma that the subjects praised him in all ways excepting in the matter of his acceptance of Sītā after her stay in the mansion of the demon Rāvaṇa.[81] The system of spies in those days was an essential part of the governmental machinery as it is even in the present times.

There is, however, no reference to ambassadors or friendly emissaries posted and maintained in other States as is the prevailing craze at present. Probably the work of these costly and comparatively useless and ornamental figureheads was more efficiently done by clever spies who were deputed to watch the activities of enemies in foreign territories.

JUDGE

The king himself was the judge or administrator of justice in his kingdom.[82] He attended both to the civil and criminal administration of justice.[83] The king when dispensing justice was attended upon and helped by experts in various departments of law (धर्मस्थसखः).

ROYAL PHYSICIANS

There were physicians attached to the palace. Dhruvasiddhi who was called to cure the Vidūṣaka of his pretended

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81. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 31 :
स किंवदन्तीं वदतां पुरोगः स्ववृत्तमुद्दिश्य विशुद्धवृत्तः ।
सर्पाधिराजोरुभुजोऽपसर्पं पप्रच्छ भद्रं विजितारिभद्रः ॥

82. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 18 : नृपतिः प्रकृतीरवेक्षितुं व्यवहारासनमाददे युवा ।
Raghuvaṁśa XVII. 39 :
स धर्मस्थसखः शश्वदर्थिप्रत्यर्थिनां स्वयम् ।
ददर्श संशयच्छेद्यान्व्यवहारानतन्द्रितः ॥

83. *Śākuntala* V. 8 :
नियमयसि कुमार्गप्रस्थितानात्तदण्डः प्रशमयसि विवादं कल्पसे रक्षणाय ।
Śākuntala Act V, p. 154 :
धर्मासनादुत्थिताय पुनरुपरोधकारि कण्वशिष्यागमनमस्मै नोत्सहे निवेदितुम् ।

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snake-bite was the royal physician attached to Agnimitra's palace. References to royal physicians occur in v. 93 of Canto VIII and also in vv. 49 and 53 of Canto XIX of *Raghuvaṁśa*.

There were certain diseases which were frankly admitted to be incurable.[84]

If the treatment of the physicians did not prove successful, the friends and relations of the deceased consoled themselves with the idea that the allotted span of life of the patient was at an end in which case even the most efficacious remedies are bound to fail.[85]

ARMY

We have dealt with individual officers and personal retinue of the king with a view to give an idea as to his majesty and importance. No king, it will be readily admitted, can exist without an efficient army. In ancient times armies consisted of four departments: (1) पदाति—foot-soldiers i.e. infantry, (2) रथी—those who rode in chariots, (3) अश्वसादी—those who rode horses i.e. cavalry, (4) गजसादी—those who rode elephants.[86] Elephants did the work of the present armoured cars. It is presumed that the अस्त्रs did duty for the recent atom bombs but in a much more efficacious and perfectly controlled manner. As we have

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84. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 93 :
प्राणान्तहेतुमपि तं भिषजामसाध्यं लाभं प्रियानुगमने त्वरया स मेने ।
Raghuvaṁśa XIX. 53 : वैद्यैरनपरिभाविनं गदं न प्रदीप इव वायुमत्यगात् ।
Kumārasambhava II. 43 : वीर्यवन्त्यौषधानीव विकारे सांनिपातिके ।

85. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 40 : प्रतिकारविधानमायुषः सति शेषे हि फलाय कल्पते ।

86. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 37 :
पत्तिः पदातिं रथिनं रथेशस्तुरंगसादी तुरगाधिरूढम् ।
यन्ता गजस्याभ्यपतद्गजस्थं तुल्यप्रतिद्वन्द्वि बभूव युद्धम् ॥
Raghuvaṁśa IX. 10 : गजवती जवतीवहया चमूः ।
Raghuvaṁśa IV. 83 :
तमीशः कामरूपाणामत्याखण्डलविक्रमम् ।
मेने भिन्नकटैर्नागैरन्यानुपरुरोध यैः ॥

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devoted a separate chapter to the mode of warfare and nature of weapons in vogue at the time, it is unnecessary to expatiate further on this topic.

FORTRESSES

It was customary to build fortresses as a measure of defence and military strength. दुर्ग was one of the seven ingredients (अङ्गs) considered necessary for a strong and prosperous king. The frontier fortresses were known as प्रत्यन्तs.[87] The keeper of the frontier fortress was called अन्तपाल.[88] Building up fortresses continued right up to the time of the Great Shivaji who was responsible for building a number of strong fortresses to strengthen his hold on the territories conquered by him from the Mahomedans. The completely changed nature of the modern warfare, especially the use of aeroplanes and bombs, has almost completely nullified the importance of fortresses as a means of successful defence.

THE POLICE FORCE

Kālidāsa's wonderful insight into human nature and his skill in fetching a complete picture before the eye by a few clever strokes of his pen (see also the description of the king's hunting campaign in the beginning of Act II of *Śākuntala*) is never so observable as in the portraiture of the police force in Act VI of *Śākuntala*. The needlessly rude and offensive taunts with which the poor fisherman is treated for no other reason than that he was a suspect and therefore considered the legitimate prey of the police, is a characteristic of this class in all times. Their eagerness to procure conviction of the accused by means fair or foul

87. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 26 : स गुप्तमूलप्रत्यन्तः शुद्धपार्ष्णिरयान्वितः।

88. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act I, p. 10 :
ममोपान्तिकमुपसर्पन्नन्तरा त्वदीयेनान्तपालेनावरुद्धः गृहीतः।
Raghuvaṁśa XVII. 52 :
दुर्गाणि दुर्ग्रहाण्यासंस्तस्य रोद्धुरपि द्विषाम्।
न हि सिंहो गजास्कन्दी भयाद्गिरिगुहाशयः॥

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is also well-known. If the suspected person is honourably acquitted, these very people are not a whit ashamed to fawn upon him and request him to treat them with drinks.[89] Considering that this picture is more than 2000 years old and wonderfully corresponds with what we find today, one feels almost despondent as to any possible improvement in the morale of the police force which is usually recruited from the lower level of humanity and the few good people who may happen to enter the service are soon corrupted and vulgarized by the inherently vicious environments of their daily occupation and constant association with a low class of people. It will be noticed that all these higher and lower police officers speak the बालभाषा as they belong to the comparatively illiterate class. The clever delineation of the police cadre in *Śākuntala* savours of the Śūdraka touch.

The word श्याल appearing in this connection calls for some remarks. श्याल literally means "a brother-in-law". It is but natural that a one man's rule should result in a somewhat unrestrained nepotism. The kings in those days had many wives and such wives must have had brothers who naturally looked to the king for support and patronage. It is inevitable therefore that offices with fat emoluments should be bestowed on the wives' relatives even though they may have happened to be incompetent and otherwise undeserving. The राजश्यालक संस्थानिक in *Mṛcchakaṭika* is a famous character in Sanskrit dramatic literature. Vīrasena is mentioned in *Mālavikāgnimitra* as a brother of an inferior caste of the queen and he is appointed as the chief officer in a frontier fortress.[90] These royal favourites, as a rule

89. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 184 : रक्षिणौ—गच्छ अरे गण्डभेदक ।
Śākuntala Act VI, p. 185 :
प्रस्फुरतो मम हस्तावस्य वधार्थं सुमनसः पिनद्धुम् ।
Śākuntala Act I, p. 183 :
श्याल—धीवर, महत्तरस्त्वं प्रियवयस्यक इदानीं मे संवृत्तः । कादम्बरीसाक्षिक-मस्माकं प्रथमसौहृदमिष्यते । तच्छौण्डिकापणमेव गच्छामः ।

90. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act VI, p. 9 :
अस्ति देव्या वर्णावरो भ्राता वीरसेनो नाम । स भर्त्रा नर्मदातीरेऽन्तपालदुर्गे स्थापितः ।

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without proper qualifications, were rude and discourteous in their behaviour and acquired such a bad odour among the people that in course of time the word श्याल (साला, Mar.) became an opprobrious and abusive term.

STRATEGY

There are many clever observations of the poet regarding the strategy and policy which kings should observe for successfully ruling their kingdom. It will not be out of place to note down and briefly comment upon some of them.

A king must be free from irrational prejudices or prepossessions and must impartially judge a man by his merits alone. Even an old friend or relative who is discovered to be of a questionable or objectionable character must be unhesitatingly discarded and an honest, well-behaved and competent person although he is a complete stranger or even of a hostile family should be conciliated and won over to his side by the king.[91] The उपमा is apt and striking. It is painful to cut off one's finger but if it is bitten by a snake there is hardly any other alternative to save one's life. Many a king has met his ruin owing to the deleterious influence of wicked and vicious friends and favourites.

Gambling, hunting, drinking and women are principally the four pitfalls to which kings were then subject.[92] How Dharmarāja and Naḷa, both pious kings, suffered owing to over-addiction to gambling is well-known. How Daśaratha owing to his over-addiction to hunting in Canto IX was led about the deplorable death of the ascetic's son Śrāvaṇa

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91. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 23 :
द्वेष्योऽपि संयतः शिष्टस्तस्यार्तस्य यथौषधम् ।
त्याज्यो दुष्टः प्रियोऽप्यासीदङ्गुलीवोरगक्षता ॥

92. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 7 :
न मृगयाभिरतिर्न दुरोदरं न च शशिप्रतिमाभरणं मधु ।
तमुदयाय न वा नवयौवना प्रियतमा यतमानमपाहरत् ॥
Raghuvaṁśa IX. 69 :
परिवृद्धरागमनुबन्धसेवया मृगया जहार चतुरेव कामिनी ।

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and how the curse deservedly inflicted on him resulted in his tragic end, forms an illuminating and instructive commentary on the wayward and wanton behaviour of a confirmed hunter. To what depth of degradation a person can descend by continued over-indulgence in wine and women is vividly described in Canto XIX of *Raghuvaṁśa*. There is no other reference to gambling in Kālidāsa's writing. For a remarkable description of gambling and gamblers, *Mṛcchakaṭika* stands alone in Sanskrit literature.[93] It will be noted here that gambling is termed दुरोदर i.e. a vice whose appetite is never satisfied.

Kālidāsa thus sounds a note of warning to the princely caste as regards the above dangerous vices.

This observation applies even to ordinary people, but in the case of a king it applies with far greater force as in his case the means of satisfying his wanton desires are almost limitless. Therefore when a king is firmly gripped by the obsession for the pleasures of the senses it is difficult, if not impossible, to wean him from their clutches.[94]

Young age, superhuman strength, beauty of form and face, unbounded wealth and power, even each one of these, is enough to turn the head of its possessor and a combination of all these is so disastrous that few can escape its evil consequences.[95] The position of princes is thus fraught with extreme danger to themselves. A king, therefore, must rise above the temptations which surround him on every side in order to be able to discharge his difficult and onerous duties.

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93. *Mṛcchakaṭika* Act II, pp. 46-60.

94. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 49 :
स्वादुभिस्तु विषयैर्हृतस्ततो दुःखमिन्द्रियगणो निवार्यते ।

95. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 43 :
वयोरूपविभूतीनामेकैकं मदकारणम् ।
तानि तस्मिन्समस्तानि न तस्योत्सिषिचे मनः ।
Hitopadeśa :
यौवनं धनसंपत्तिः प्रभुत्वमविवेकिता । एकैकमप्यनर्थाय किमु यत्र चतुष्टयम् ॥

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In the case of a king offensive and indiscreet language undermines his position and may even endanger his safety. His best laid plans may be frustrated by a hasty and ill-chosen word.[96]

Kings must always bear in mind that wealth, power and suzerainty are in their nature evanascent and only await the excuse of a serious lapse, to change their master. Kings must therefore be constantly vigilant and industrious.[97]

What is called नीति i.e. अहिंसा often leads to sheer cowardice while naked and indiscriminate aggression and violence is the law of the jungle, i.e. the act of a beast of prey.[98] The appropriate golden mean between these two extreme policies should be practised by the king to achieve his end. Appeasement is a suicidal policy in the case of a wicked, unscrupulous and beastly enemy.[99] He can never be won over by showering favours on him. This is a policy of defeatism and is always construed as a sign of weakness. The only way to bring round an inveterate enemy to sanity is promptly to retaliate and punish him for his misdeeds. An evil-minded person does not know the meaning of gratitude or to reciprocate acts of kindness or friendship but only understands the language of force and fear.

"Prevention is always better than cure."[100] The king should take timely precautions to prevent disloyalty and discontent among subjects by keeping a vigilant watch over their grievances and disappointments, aspirations and desires, and try to meet their legitimate demands without undue obstinacy or a false sense of prestige.

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96. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 8 :
न च सपत्नजनेष्वपि तेन वागपरुषा परुषाक्षरमीरिता ।

97. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 15 :
श्रियमवेक्ष्य स रन्ध्रचलामभूदनलसोऽनलसोमसमद्युतिः ।

98. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 47 :
कातर्यं केवला नीतिः शौर्यं श्वापदचेष्टितम् ।
अतः सिद्धिं समेताभ्यामुभाभ्यामन्वियेष सः ॥

99. *Kumārasambhava* II. 40 : शाम्येदप्रत्यपकारेण नोपकारेण दुर्जनः ।

100. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 55 : यस्य कार्यः प्रतीकारः स तद्बुद्धेरपादयत् ।

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A very shrewd observation indeed! Pauper friends can hardly be of any use. Their whole energy is taken up in keeping their heads above water and making both ends meet. Over-prosperous friends, however, may easily become your jealous rivals and work harm to your interests. The wise course therefore is to keep them in a condition between pauperism and over-prosperity.[101]

Even the mightiest has limits to his power, and wisdom lies in readily recognizing your limitations. Fire is all-powerful and all-consuming especially when it is helped by a strong wind. It cannot however successfully attack the ocean. Germany's ill-judged and precipitate attack on Russia while the former nation was already engaged in a life-and-death struggle with other mighty powers, sealed its doom. The illustration is worthy of the poet's genius and inherent shrewdness.[102]

Wealth among other qualities has one supreme use, viz., the power to oblige others, and therefore wealthy persons are always sought after by the needy and the suffering. The cloud which is replete with water is importuned by the *cātakas*. One may not strive after wealth merely for the sake of self-indulgence or vanity but for the inexpressible joy and satisfaction of relieving the distress of others.[103]

An enemy should not be allowed to take firm root in his kingdom but should be attacked and destroyed before he becomes too strong.[104]

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101. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 58 :
हीनान्यनुपकर्तृणि प्रवृद्धानि विकुर्वते ।
तेन मध्यमशक्तीनि मित्राणि स्थापितान्यतः ॥

102. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 56 :
शक्येष्वेवाभवद्यात्रा तस्य शक्तिमतः सतः ।
समीरणसहायोऽपि नाम्भःप्रार्थी दवानलः ॥

103. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 60 :
कोशेनाश्रयणीयत्वमिति तस्यार्थसंग्रहः ।
अम्बुगर्भो हि जीमूतश्चातकैरभिनन्द्यते ॥

104. *Mālavikāgnimitra* I. 8 :
अचिराधिष्ठितराज्यः शत्रुः प्रकृतिष्वरूढमूलत्वात् ।
नवसंरोपणशिथिलस्तरुरिव सुकरः समुद्धर्तुम् ॥

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A Kṣatriya is one who saves people (his subjects) from calamities. A king being a Kṣatriya both by his caste and chosen avocation is bound to save people from troubles of all kinds.[105]

Vv. 7 and 8 of Act V of *Śākuntala* lay down in general the duties of an ideal king. He should be indifferent to his own ease and comfort and should always be striving for the good of his people ; he should bear the brunt of the troubles and difficulties which beset his kingdom but keep his subjects happy and contented as far as possible ; he should redeem the wicked from their evil ways by inflicting condign punishment and settle disputes and differences before they lead to untoward results. In short the king should, in all respects, be a father to his people.[106]

Kālidāsa especially in *Raghuvaṁśa* has given a detailed and comprehensive idea as to what the great kings of old were and what an ideal king should be. It is futile to expect that every king would reach this grand ideal in himself. It is however to the credit of this great country that there were at least some kings who fully came up to the very difficult standard of excellence whereof the great poet dreamt and wrote.

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105. *Raghuvaṁśa* II. 53 :
क्षतात्किल त्रायत इत्युदग्रः क्षत्रस्य शब्दो भुवनेषु रूढः ।

106. *Śākuntala* V. 7 :
स्वसुखनिरभिलाषः खिद्यसे लोकहेतोः प्रतिदिनमथवा ते वृत्तिरेवंविधैव ।
अनुभवति हि मूर्ध्ना पादपस्तीव्रमुष्णं शमयति परितापं छायया संश्रितानाम् ॥
Śākuntala V. 8 :
नियमयसि कुमार्गप्रस्थितानात्तदण्डः प्रशमयसि विवादं कल्पसे रक्षणाय ।
अतनुषु विभवेषु ज्ञातयः सन्तु नाम त्वयि तु परिसमाप्तं बन्धुकृत्यं प्रजानाम् ॥

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CHAPTER XII

SUPERSTITION, FANCY AND FICTION

As it is very probable that Kālidāsa wrote about 2,000 years back, it is but natural that in his writings there should be many references to popular superstitions, beliefs and fictions prevailing in or current at the time. It would be interesting to take stock of these "Idols of the cave" of ancient India. It may even turn out in course of time that many of the so-called fictions contained in these writings may eventually prove to be solid facts as in the case of Vimānas or aeroplanes. Similarly Astras (miraculous or mantric missiles) which are referred to everywhere in ancient literature of the Hindus may one day prove to have been various manifestations of the atomic power of which the modern world is just getting scent. Shakespeare never uttered a greater truth than when he observed "There are many things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio !, which are never dreamt of in your philosophy". These "fancies and fictions" may therefore adumbrate important scientific discoveries in coming ages.

THE MERU MOUNTAIN

It is not known whether the Meru mountain was a mere fiction or a real peak of great height which once existed but was later on submerged below the sea level owing to a violent earthquake or terrestrial convulsions. Meru is reputed to have been formed of gold.[1] Its appearance perhaps was of golden colour due to the existence of certain minerals of that colour on its surface. This mountain is said to have served as a churning rod when the

1. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 14 : स्थितः सर्वोन्नतेनोर्वीं क्रान्त्वा मेरुरिवात्मना ।

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Gods and the Titans churned the ocean and extracted from it the well-known fourteen jewels.

THE MYSTERIOUS NATURE OF YAJÑAS

We have dealt with the subject of Yajñas[2] in another place. It is difficult to understand how the burning of certain substances in the fire to the accompaniment of certain *mantras* had any special efficacy in the economy of nature, as was vociferously preached by the Brahmins of old. Yajñas and their ritual which as devised in great detail in the Brāhmaṇa literature was undoubtedly a clever means to maintain the undisputed supremacy of the Brahmin oligarchy over the ignorant masses. During the period the poet lived and wrote, there appears to be a great craze for celebrating Yajñas. The metaphysical meaning ascribed to the word Yajña in *Bhagavadgītā* IV. 23-32 may have a better appeal to the intelligence and commonsense of the people but the priestly class in Kālidāsa's time recognized and observed only the orthodox manner of performing the Yajña ritual as laid down in the Brāhmaṇa literature.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE "DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS"

The doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings[3] is of very great antiquity in India. The king is supposed to inherit and embody in his constitution the mighty essences of the eight guardians of the universe.[4] The king is held to be

2. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 26 : दुदोह गां स यज्ञाय सस्याय मघवा दिवम् ।
„ I. 62 : हविरावर्जितं होतस्त्वया विधिवदग्निषु ।
वृष्टिर्भवति सस्यानामवग्रहविशोषिणाम् ॥

3. „ I. 14 : सर्वातिरिक्तसारेण सर्वतेजोभिभाविना ।
स्थितः सर्वोन्नतेनोर्वीं क्रान्त्वा मेरुरिवात्मना ॥

Raghuvaṁśa II. 75 :
नरपतिकुलभूत्यै गर्भमाधत्त राज्ञी गुरुभिरभिनिविष्टं लोकपालानुभावैः ।

Raghuvaṁśa III. 58 :
शशाक निर्वापयितुं न वासवः स्वतश्च्युतं वह्निमिवाद्रिरम्बुदः ।

4. अष्टानां लोकपालानां वपुर्धारयते नृपः ।

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an incarnation of the God Viṣṇu himself who is the protector of the universe.[5] The king born in the royal line alone can bear the great responsibility and burden of governing and protecting his subjects.[6]

It was believed that sacrificial fires went forth to welcome the hermits returning to the Āśramas from distant forests visited by them to gather *samidhs* and other necessary articles required for daily religious observances.[7]

It was firmly believed that *ṛṣis* like Vasiṣṭha were able by means of the holy *mantras* to overthrow and subjugate the enemies of kings who happened to be their disciples.[8]

THE PIṆḌADĀNA TO THE DECEASED ANCESTORS

It was and still is the belief among many Hindus that the manes (souls of deceased ancestors) live, in the ethereal or astral regions, on the nourishment they receive from the balls of rice and sprinkling of water which on their anniversary day their descendants offer to them.[9] It is on this account that a staunch orthodox Hindu is very anxious to have a son and in his absence adopts a male child of another person. Piṇḍadāna like other age-old ideas, although they die hard, are showing signs of becoming obsolete in a short time in the present rationalistic age.

THE LOKĀLOKA MOUNTAIN

Lokāloka is a fabulous mountain which was lighted on one side and totally dark on the other. King Dilīpa com-

5. नाविष्णुः पृथिवीपतिः ।

6. *Vikramorvaśīya* V. 18 : जान्यैवायं स्वकार्यसहो भरः ।

7. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 49 : अदृश्याग्निप्रत्युद्यातैस्तपस्विभिः ।

8. „ I. 61 :
तव मन्त्रकृतो मन्त्रैर्दूरात्प्रशमितारिभिः ।
प्रत्यादिश्यन्त इव मे दृष्टलक्ष्याभिदः शराः ॥

9. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 66 :
नूनं मत्तः परं वंश्याः पिण्डविच्छेददर्शिनः ।
न प्रकामभुजः श्राद्धे स्वधासंग्रहतत्पराः ॥
Śākuntala VI. 25.

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pares himself to Lokāloka inasmuch as the one side of his life is bright and prosperous while the other is dark and depressing (due to his not having a son).[10]

PĀTĀLA

Pātāla is believed to be modern America where there is unmistakable evidence that the ancient Indians had penetrated and lived long before Columbus discovered the continent for the Europeans.[11] It was reputed to be the land of serpents with Śeṣa as their king. The trackless forests of America are said to be the refuge of enormously large serpents of various kinds even to this day.

YOGASIDDHIS

Yogins, ascetics and sages of old were known to possess miraculous powers whereby they could produce any article or arrange for any convenience for the comfort of deserving guests.[12] It is doubtful if holy men of this spiritual calibre still exist in India.

SARPAMANTRA AND OTHER MANTRAS

This[13] is not altogether a fiction. The writer has completely satisfied himself as to the irresistible potency of the Sarpamantra (incantations exerting immense control and influence over poisonous snakes). Large and fearful serpents are rendered absolutely harmless by the use of these mantras, and can be handled like lifeless ropes. The मन्त्री

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10. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 68 : प्रकाशश्चाप्रकाशश्च लोकालोक इवाचलः ।
11. „ I. 80 : भुजङ्गपिहितद्वारं पातालमिवितिष्ठति ।
12. „ I. 94 :
सत्यामपि तपःसिद्धौ नियमापेक्षया मुनिः ।
कल्पविःकल्पयामास वन्यामेवास्य संविधाम् ॥
Raghuvaṁśa XV. 12 :
तमृषिः पूजयामास कुमारं क्रान्तवाहनम् ।
तपःप्रभावसिद्धाभिर्विशेषप्रतिपत्तिभिः ॥
Śākuntala Act IV, p. 130 : गौतमी —किं मानसी सिद्धिः ।
13. *Raghuvaṁśa* II. 32 : भोगीव मन्त्रौषधिरुद्धवीर्यः ।

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(snake-charmer) often draws a circle and places the snake inside it and it will die of starvation rather than cross beyond the charmed circle. Similarly cobras are placed in coat pockets and quietly stay there until they are released. The wording of the mantra is apparently meaningless and the language is said to be Barbarī which may have now gone out of vogue. The snake-charmer must observe and submit to many restrictions and inhibitions and the more strictly these are observed the mantra gathers more potency and effect. Similarly the writer has had the amazing experience of having his severe neuralgic pains which troubled him for days together, got rid off in five minutes, by the operation of a mantra. It is a subject worth careful investigation on a purely scientific and rational basis.

THE DIVINE QUALITIES OF GOMŪTRA

Indra belonged to the celestial race and was naturally invisible to mortals. But Raghu having rinsed his eyes with the water oozing from the body of the divine cow (urinal discharge) was able to see Indra who was surreptitiously dragging away the sacrificial horse of his father (Dilīpa).[14] There is still a belief in India that there are useful medicinal properties in cow's urine and daily rinsing the eyes with it prevents and even cures any malaise of the eyesight. Some medicines in Indian Pharmacopoeia are administered to patients with cow's urine.

JVALITAMAHAUṢADHIDĪPIKĀS

There are frequent references in Sanskrit literature to plants which diffuse a strong light round about them on a dark night.[15] We are told that sometimes a row of such

14. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 41 :
तदङ्गनिष्यन्दजलेन लोचने प्रमृज्य पुण्येन पुरस्कृतः सताम् ।

15. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 75 : आसन्नौषधयो नेतर्नक्तमस्नेहदीपिकाः
„ IX. 70 : ज्वलितमहौषधिदीपिकासनाथाम् ।
Kumārasambhava I. 10 :
वनेचराणां वनितासखानां दरीगृहोत्सङ्गनिषक्तभासः ।
भवन्ति यत्रौषधयो रजन्यामतैलपूराः सुरतप्रदीपाः ॥

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lights is visible from distant jungle tracts, which superstitious rustics take to be ghosts and evil spirits having nocturnal orgies with lighted torches in their hands. It may be that certain plants can produce phosphorescent effect on dark nights.

GANDHAGAJAS

Are there any elephants of this class (गन्धगज)[16] whose ruttings emit a peculiarly strong smell which itself inspires with fear and scares away ordinary elephants?

MYSTERIOUS LINK OF SYMPATHY BETWEEN HUMANS AND PLANTS

According to poetical convention, there appears to be a mysterious link of sympathy and sentiment between the human and the vegetable world. Priyaṅgu creeper is said to put forth its blossoms by the mere touch of a young woman. The Bakula trees puts forth plentiful flowers if a damsel throws a mouthful of wine on it.[17] The Aśoka flowers if it is sportively kicked by a young girl, the Tilaka by her loving glances, the Kurabaka by an embrace, the Mandāra by a jocular repartee, the Campaka by a sweet smile; the Cūta requires singing, and the Karṇikāra dancing. But in every case a young beautiful girl is required to perform the kind service and it is surprising and somewhat unfair that the mere male is completely shut out from this privilege. An extremely charming fancy on the whole and appears to endorse Dr. Bose's subsequent discovery that the vegetable world is fully sentient and susceptible to kindness as well as cruelty.

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16. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 43:
सप्तच्छदक्षीरकटुप्रवाहमसह्यमाघ्राय मदं तदीयम्।
विलङ्घिताधोरणतीव्रयत्नाः सेनागजेन्द्रा विमुखा बभूवुः॥

17. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 30:
सुवदनावदनासवसंभृतस्तदनुवादिगुणः कुसुमोद्गमः।
मधुकरैरकरोन्मधुलोलुपैर्बकुलमाकुलमायतपङ्क्तिभिः॥

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PEARLS IN THE TEMPLES OF ELEPHANTS

The lion, it is said, by means of the blow of one of his powerful fore-paws sunders the temple of an elephant with the result that the pearls, which the animal's head is reputed to contain, are either scattered round about or are caught in the nails of the lion's paws.[18] It is difficult to believe that there is any truth in this time-honoured idea that the temples of elephants contain pearls. How old poets conceived this grotesque idea and clung to it for hundreds of years is difficult to understand.

"ŚABDABHEDĪ" ARCHERS

There appear to have existed such skilled archers as could hit at an unseen person by merely listening to the sound emanating from him. The story of the blind king Prithviraj who killed the treacherous and ungrateful Muhammad Ghori by his arrow by merely hearing him speak, is well known.[19]

THE BALĀTIBALĀ MYSTIC CHARM

The Balātibalā mystic charm put strength and endurance in a tired body.[20] It was very probably a mantra. One naturally feels admiration for those wonderful people who could achieve surprising results by means of appropriate mantras.

HUMANISED "MONKEYS", "BEARS" AND "VULTURES"

Were Jaṭāyu as well as his powerful brother Sampāti[21] birds (vultures), or did they, like the alleged monkeys and bears, belong to some class of aborigines who were con-

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18. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 65 :
तान्हत्वा गजकुलबद्धतीव्रवैरान्काकुत्स्थः कुटिलनखाग्रलग्नमुक्तान् ।

19. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 73 : शब्दपातिनमिषुं विससर्ज ।

20. „ XI. 9 : तौ बलातिबलयोः प्रभावतो न मम्लतुः ।

21. „ XII. 53 : जहार सीतां पक्षीन्द्रश्चयातक्षणविस्मितः ।

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temptuously called birds by the civilized Aryans? Jaṭāyu spoke to Rāma before his death and his obsequial ceremonies were performed by Rāma as if he were the latter's blood-relation.

THE MYSTIC POWERS OF THE RĀKṢASAS

The Rākṣasas or the aboriginal tribes of India were credited with black magic.[22] Hence an illusion of Rāma's head cut off from his body was created by means of black magic with a view to induce Sītā to succumb to the wicked overtures of Rāvaṇa. So also the demon Mārīcha by assuming the form of the golden deer enticed away Rāma from the hermitage so that Sītā could be easily abducted in his absence. In *Śākuntala* also the demons obstructed and imperilled the sacrificial rites by resorting to various illusory forms.[23] In the Mahābhārata war Ghaṭotkaca is stated to have created great havoc in the Kaurava forces by his black magic so that Karṇa was obliged to kill him by discharging at him the Vāsavī Śakti, a terrible weapon which he had carefully preserved for killing Arjuna. Black magic thus appears to have advanced a good deal among the original inhabitants of India and it is said that there are still marked traces of it in some parts of Southern India.

DIAMOND-HOODED SERPENTS

Just as elephants are reputed to carry pearls in their temples, the serpents were believed to possess resplendent

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22. *Raghuvaṁśa* XII. 74 :
अथ रामशिरश्छेददर्शनोद्भ्रान्तचेतनाम् ।
सीतां मायेति शंसन्ती त्रिजटा समजीवयत् ॥
Raghuvaṁśa XII. 53 : रक्षसा मृगरूपेण वञ्चयित्वा स राघवौ ।

23. *Śākuntala* III. 24 :
छायाश्चरन्ति बहुधा भयमादधानाः संध्यापयोदकपिशाः पिशिताशनानाम् ।

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jewels in their hood.[24] This is another traditional legend. The jewel in the serpent's hood, it is said, is separable at his pleasure. The author still remembers an exciting tale heard in his childhood. A rustic, about nightfall, was returning from the jungle with a load of firewood in his basket. The day being the last of the dark half of the month, he was suddenly overtaken on his way with pitch darkness on the outskirts of the jungle. While feeling his way carefully he perceived, at some distance, a bright light diffused as it were from a lamp. Proceeding further he was amazed to find a small ball of very brilliant light on the ground and moving a bit further to examine the thing, he had to fall back in sheer terror as his eyes fell on a large and ferocious cobra who was moving near about by the light of the jewel. An idea suddenly struck him and he emptied his basket of the firewood and, moving cautiously and noiselessly forward, suddenly dropped the basket over the jewel with the result that its light was suddenly and completely extinguished. The serpent, surprised at the sudden darkness, began to search round for the precious stone, but could not find it. Infuriated at the loss of the jewel, in his desperation, he forcibly struck his hood on a large stone and killed himself. The rustic sold the jewel for a small amount and it passed over to many hands but proved so disastrously unlucky, wherever it went, that its last holder threw it into the sea in sheer terror. Serpents are also associated with treasure-troves or buried wealth where they are supposed to keep watch as guardians.

THE FEMALE CUCKOO

Duṣyanta brands all womankind as crafty and selfish.

24. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 12 :
वेलानिलाय प्रसृता भुजङ्गा महोर्मिविस्फूर्जथुनिर्विशेषाः ।
सूर्यांशुसंपर्कसमृद्धगर्वैर्व्यज्यन्त एते मणिभिः फणस्थैः ॥
Kumārasambhava II. 38 :
ज्वलन्मणिशिखाश्चैनं वासुकिप्रमुखा निशि ।
स्थिरप्रदीपतामेत्य भुजङ्गाः पर्युपासते ॥

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Even among the lower creation, he says, the female cuckoo contrives to have her young ones brought up and cared for by the crow taking advantage of the great similarity of size and colour of their respective eggs and mixing hers with those of the crow. How far this legend is true has not been ascertained but in all probability it is a pure hoax. It is noteworthy that the words Parabhṛtā and Dvija are cleverly used in the verse below in a double sense so as to convey a poisonous innuendo against innocent Śakuntalā who was the offspring of a celestial courtezan and was abandoned by the mother immediately after her birth.[25]

THE EVER-THIRSTY CĀṬAKA

The Cātaka is a bird which is popularly believed to slake its thirst by swallowing such stray drops of rain-water as may fall from the sky in its upturned open beak. It is believed that its body is so formed that it cannot bend its head and drink the water of pools and rivers.[26] S. P. Pandit in his notes on *Vikramorvaśīya* narrates a legendary incident with reference to this bird. In Hindu society the inveterate animosity between the mother-in-law and the young daughter-in-law is proverbial. A cruel mother-in-law after exhausting all devices for ill-treating and tormenting her helpless daughter-in-law hit upon the cruel idea of preventing her from satisfying her thirst by taking in so much as a drop of water. Driven to desperation by her agonising thirst, the poor victim of torture stealthily resorted to the cattle-shed and avidly applied her parched mouth to the water bucket placed before a cow. The ever-watchful mother-in-law caught her in the act and incensed at what she considered disobedience of her express order, lifted the water bucket and struck it heavily on the head of the poor

25. *Śākuntala* V. 22 :
प्रागन्तरिक्षगमनात्स्वमपत्यजातमन्यैर्द्विजैः परभृताः खलु पोषयन्ति ।

26. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act II, p. 33 :
अतस्तावत्त्वया दिव्यरसाभिलाषिणा चातकव्रतं गृहीतम् ।

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girl who was instantaneously killed. While breathing her last, she cursed her wicked mother-in-law that she would be turned into a bird, whose constant agony of thirst would only be allayed by imbibing a few drops of rainwater falling from the sky. The cry of the Cātaka bird is fancied to be a cry for rain (पावसा गो! Mar.).

JALASTAMBHINĪ VIDYĀ

In *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 38 there is a reference to subaqueous human abodes which are also referred to in Canto XIX.[27] There must have been some device whereby human habitations were constructed below water. In Canto XVI of *Raghuvaṁśa,* Kumuda the serpent prince is said to be living in a palace below the surface of the river Śarayū. In *Mahābhārata,* Duryodhana who is stated to have known the Jalastambhinī Vidyā (the art of rendering water a fit habitation for human beings) was concealing himself in a pool to avoid immediate fight with the mighty Bhīma. As owing to the rapidly increasing population the surface of the earth will be soon rendered insufficient to accommodate the human race, it is hoped that man's intrepid genius will find means to utilize the immense space below the surface of the oceans by building large and populous cities there.

THE DEVASTATING "CURSES"

It is said that the ascetics (तपस्विनः) of old had the power to punish their enemies and oppressors by destroying them by means of a curse, but as such conduct entailed loss of their religious merit, they as a rule refrained from doing so and made use of the Kṣatriyas to punish the wicked.[28] It is on this account that Duṣyanta observes in *Śākuntala,* that in ascetics whose dominant quality is self-

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27. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 38 :
एतन्मुनेर्मानिनि शातकर्णेः पञ्चाप्सरो नाम विहारवारि ।
Raghuvaṁśa XIX. 9 : गूढमोहनगृहास्तदम्बुभिः स व्यगाहत विगाढमन्मथः ।

28. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 3 : त्राणाभावे हि शापास्त्राः कुर्वन्ति तपसो व्ययम् ।

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discipline and self-restraint, there lies dormant a fearful spark which may flare up and burn down their oppressors.[29]

In England and other western countries also it is still believed that curses still cling to some places or families. In ancient India the curses of holy sages were more dreaded than lethal weapons or even mystic missiles (अस्त्र.) In *Śākuntala* the curse of Durvāsas is the pivot round about which the entire plot of the drama revolves, and in *Meghadūta* also it is the curse of Kubera wherein the meagre plot of the masterly lyric takes its rise. In *Raghuvaṁśa* it is the curse of Nandinī the divine cow, which prevents the king Dilīpa from having a son. In Canto V of *Raghuvaṁśa* the Gandharva by name Priyaṁvada is changed into a powerful elephant by the curse of the sage Mātaṅga. In Canto VIII of *Raghuvaṁśa* Hariṇī the celestial nymph is mentioned to have been cursed by Tṛṇabindu to be born a mortal on earth. In Canto IX of *Raghuvaṁśa* Daśaratha is cursed by the old father of Śrāvaṇa whom the former had killed through a mistake. In v. 47 of Canto X of *Raghuvaṁśa* reference is made to the curse of Nalakūbara against Rāvaṇa that the latter would be burnt to ashes if he molested a woman against her wishes, while v. 34 of Canto XI of *Raghuvaṁśa* refers to the curse of Gautama against his own wife.

In *Kumārasambhava* as in *Śākuntala* the incidence of a curse is the most important event in the theme, whereby the God of Love was burnt down by Śaṅkara. In Canto IX of *Kumārasambhava* Pārvatī curses the God of Fire for violating her privacy.

The above instances are cited to show that in ancient India the curse of a holy man was considered a living vital agency which often changed the course of events and moulded the destinies of its victims in a surprising manner. Fortunately or otherwise, in the present times, there are hardly any persons endowed with the necessary spiritual calibre to be able to let loose such fool-proof and devastating curses. It remains, however, an intriguing question

29. *Śākuntala* II. 7 : शमप्रधानेषु तपोधनेषु गूढं हि दाहात्मकमस्ति तेजः ।

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whether curses even in olden times were ever invested with such dynamic potency.

REGIONS AND ZONES IN THE SKY WITH ELECTRIC CURRENTS OF VARYING POWERS

Kālidāsa imagines that ether is divided into various regions and zones with currents of varying power and endowed with different functions. The ethereal zone referred to here is the Parivaha zone which by means of its powerful currents (may be electric or atomic) sets in motion the stars and keeps them in their prescribed courses.[30] Mallinātha quotes an extract of *Viṣṇupurāṇa* (which mostly deals with the cosmology of the Hindus) in support of this theory.

Kālidāsa uses a striking device to convince Duṣyanta that he himself was the father of the child.[31]

It is believed that the cobra poison can be nullified and rendered impotent by some mantric ceremonies performed with the assistance, among other things, of several vessels filled with water (उदकुम्भ).[32]

VĀLAKHILYAS

Who are these 60,000 Vālakhilyas who are said to accompany the sun in his daily course ?[33] Are these colours of various shades, inherent in the rays of the sun which defy analysis by means of the available spectroscope and other similar instruments ? An important scientific truth

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30. *Śakuntala* VII. 6 : वायोरिमं परिवहस्य वदन्ति मार्गम् ।

31. ,, Act VII, p. 249 :
एषाऽपराजिता नामौषधिरग्र्य जातकर्मसमये भगवता मारीचेन दत्ता । एतां किल मातापितरावात्मानं च वर्जयित्वाऽपरो भूमिपतितां न गृह्णाति ॥

32. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act IV, p. 69 :
ध्रुवसिद्धिर्विज्ञापयति उदकुम्भविधानेन सर्षमुद्रितं किमपि कल्पयितव्यम् ।

33. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 41 :
सामभिः सहचराः सहस्रशः स्यन्दनाश्वहृदयंगमस्वनैः ।
भानुमभ्रिपरिकीर्णतेजसं संस्तुवन्ति किरणोष्मपायिनः ॥

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may be hidden in this apparently extravagant and fantastic statement.

EVIL OMENS

In Canto XV of *Kumārasambhava* the writer has given an almost exhaustive list of inauspicious omens.[34] Tāraka the terrible demon who is soon destined to meet his death, is marching for battle against the divine Kumāra, the son of the God Śaṅkara, and as coming events cast their shadows before, he is beset on his way with a series of evil omens which the poet graphically enumerates in this canto. Birds of prey, such as vultures, hovered over and even boldly attacked not only the army but also its terrible and hitherto invincible leader. Violent and destructive winds, which raised blinding dust, tore down and blew away the banners and umbrellas of the army, and threw the horses and elephants out of their course, arose all of a sudden. Black giant cobras vomiting poisonous fire out of their exposed fangs were found rolling in the path of the ill-fated army. The sun became surrounded by a big dark circle which presented the illusion of the coil of a terrible cobra. Old jackals presented themselves from somewhere and raised a dismal, long-drawn-out howl in front of the advancing hordes of Tāraka. Shooting stars of great lustre fell round about the army. From the cloudless sky crashed down terrible thunderbolts accompanied by dazzling lightning and ear-splitting and heart-rending thunderclaps. The sky in all directions was filled with dusky smoke and showered burning embers accompanied by human bones and big blood drops. A sudden violent earthquake threw Tāraka's army into complete disorder. The royal umbrella of Tāraka was thrown down in the dust topsyturvy by a suddenly shooting adverse wind and looked like a large vessel to be soon used at Death's feast. The jewels of the royal crown of Tāraka automatically dropped to the ground as if indicating that his head itself

34. *Kumārasambhava* XV. 14, 24, 27-31.

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would soon be similarly lopped down. A large serpent was observed by people winding itself round about his royal banner. The manes of the chariot-horses, their chowries, the very poles of the chariot and the quivers of arrows took fire without any apparent cause.

In Canto XI of *Raghuvaṁśa* when the vindictive and terrible warrior Paraśurāma was on his way to meet Rāmabhadra, almost similar evil omens took place.[35]

GOOD OMENS

Auspicious omens are noted by the poet in their proper places. When Pārvatī was born, the sky became crystal clear, the breezes cool, refreshing and free from dust and a shower of heavenly flowers marked the time of her birth.[36]

In Canto III of *Raghuvaṁśa* when the illustrious Raghu was born good omens similar to the above took place. The fire swerving on the right side to accept the offered oblations is considered a good omen.[37]

In *Uttara-Megha* the throbbing of the left thigh and left eye of the Yakṣa's wife is mentioned as prophesying the imminent visit to her of the friendly cloud conveying the good tidings and the loving message of her husband.[38]

In *Pūrva-Megha* the Yakṣa assures the Megha that auspicious omens will accompany the latter and favourable breezes will gently waft him on his desired course, Cātaka birds will coo sweetly on his left side, and the herons will in a well-arranged row welcome him.[39]

It will be interesting to note that even in ancient times, there were people who attached no importance to such omens. King Duryodhana in *Veṇīsaṁhāra* boldly declares that wise men should not take count of the movements of stars, of good and bad dreams, and good and evil omens

35. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 58-61.
36. *Kūmārasambhava* I. 23.
37. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 14.
38. *Meghadūta* II. 32-33.
39. „ I. 9.

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as these are merely accidental happenings.[40] But Duryodhana has been described as an intimate friend of Cārvāka the arch-heretic and unbeliever—which may to some extent explain his unorthodox views. This belief in good and evil omens is not peculiar to India but is shared by people in many other parts of the world.

MYSTIC MISSILES

References to various Astras are found in the works of Kālidāsa and other poets like Bhavabhūti and Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa. In *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* also such references are numerous. In Nārāyṇabhaṭṭa's *Veṇīsaṁhāra* there is only a passing reference to Astras.[41] Perhaps the Śakti thrown by Arjuna or Vṛṣasena might have been a kind of Astra. What was the exact nature of the Astras it is very difficult to say. From their description it appears certain that they were powerful engines of destruction and wide devastation like the newly discovered atom and hydrogen bombs. The curious thing about these Astras was that they were discharged by the use of certain mantras appropriate to each of them and were also similarly withdrawn. We have already referred to the बलातिबला विद्या and सर्पमन्त्र in this connection. The modern world has still to discover the mystic and powerful effects of mantras and their meaning.

The Astras mentioned in *Raghuvaṁśa* are as follows: वज्रास्त्र has been referred to in v. 60 of Canto III.[42] In Canto V, the Gandharva by name Priyaṁvada endows prince Aja with संमोहनास्त्र in return of being restored to his original form, by the discharge of which by Aja later on the hostile army became completely paralyzed and helpless.[43] In

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40. *Veṇīsaṁhāra* II. 14 :
ग्रहाणां चरितं स्वप्नं निमित्तान्युपयाचितम् ।
फलन्ति काकतालीयं तेभ्यः प्राज्ञो न बिभ्यति ॥

41. *Veṇīsaṁhāra* III. 7 : अस्त्रज्वालावलीढप्रतिबलजलधेरन्तरौर्वायमाणे ।

42. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 60 : स्फुरत्प्रभामण्डलमस्त्रमाददे ।

43. „ V. 59; VII. 61.

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Canto XI[44] Viśvāmitra is stated to have imparted to Rāma, having been pleased with his wonderful exploit, an Astra named नैर्ऋतघ्न, the killer of demons, accompanied with its appropriate mantra. In the same canto वायुदेवतास्त्र is also mentioned. In v. 76 of Canto XII reference is made to नागपाशास्त्र whereby the arrows discharged take the shape of powerful serpents and attack the hostile army. The counteracting or remedial Astra to the above is गरुडास्त्र, which drives away the serpents. Rāvaṇa met his death at the hands of Rāma by becoming a prey to ब्रह्मास्त्र, perhaps the most powerful of all weapons. The poet describes the ineffable grandeur of its manifestation in the sky as follows: "The Astra divided itself in hundred parts which shone with dazzling splendour and looked like the body of a colossal serpent with innumerable resplendent hoods."[45] It is surmised that the explosion of an atom bomb in the course of its cataclysmic devastation may bear some resemblance to the above description. In v. 22 of Canto XV ऐन्द्रास्त्र is mentioned.[46] In v. 24 of Canto XV वैष्णवबाण is referred to.[47] In v. 77 of Canto XVI गरुडास्त्र is mentioned as about to be used for the destruction of Kumudanāga.[48]

In *Kumārasambhava* also references to Astras are found. नागपाशविशिखैः which are already described are also mentioned in v. 6 of Canto XVII of *Kumārasambhava*.[49] In Canto XII of *Raghuvaṁśa* the same Astra is discharged by Meghanāda.[50] In v. 25 of Canto XVII of *Kumārasambhava* reference is made to वायव्यास्त्र and its devastating effects are

44. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 21 : नैर्ऋतघ्नमथ मन्त्रवन्मुनेः प्रापदस्त्रमवदानतोषितात् ।
45. „ XII. 98 :
तद्व्योम्नि शतधा भिन्नं ददृशे दीप्तिमन्मुखम् ।
वपुर्महोरगस्येव करालफणमण्डलम् ॥
46. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 22 : ऐन्द्रमस्त्रमुपादाय शत्रुघ्नेन स ताडितः ।
47. „ XV. 24 :
कार्ष्णेन पत्रिणा शत्रुः स भिन्नहृदयः पतन् ।
क्षालिनाय भुवः कम्पं जहागाश्रमवासिनाम् ॥
48. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 77 : गारुत्मतं तीरगतस्तरस्वी भुजङ्गनाशाय समादधेऽस्त्रम् ॥
49. *Kumārasambhava* XVII. 6.
50. *Raghuvaṁśa* XII. 76.

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described in vv. 26-32 of that canto. In v. 34 of Canto XVII is mentioned the use of अग्यस्त्र by Tāraka and its operation described in vv. 36-38. Kumāra in his turn discharged वारुणास्त्र which is described in vv. 41-45.

In v. 49 of Canto XVII Kumāra is stated to have discharged a powerful Śakti against Tāraka which also appears to be like some manifestation of atomic power (v. 50).

A persistent and ever-recurring reference to various Astras cannot be dismissed or ignored on the supposition that they were mere figments of the imagination. A conspiracy of lies on such a wide scale is inconceivable. The Astras must have existed in some shape or form and were transmitted with great caution to a few chosen persons. Owing to the destruction of the Kṣatriya race in the Mahābhārata war or the general decadence of the martial spirit due to the rise of Buddhism or Jainism, the knowledge of the Astras (Astravidyā) must have gradually become extinct. The present researches into the nature and potentialities of the atomic power may in time lead to some discoveries in this direction.

It is however difficult to dissociate the Astras from their appropriate Mantras whereby they were discharged, withdrawn and controlled.

It is stated that the mantras were discovered by the old Indian sages in their yogic trance, after severe austerities, in ingratiating themselves with the Astradevatās (the presiding deities of the Astras). The discovery of जृम्भकास्त्र is described by Bhavabhūti as quoted below.[51] Who can know what lies in the womb of time?

FAITH IN THE POWER OF THE PLANETS OVER HUMAN LIVES AND THEIR APPEASEMENT OR PROPITIATION

The belief in adverse fate or bad stars is a very old and

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51. *Bhavabhūti* :
ब्रह्मादयो ब्रह्महिताय तत्त्वा परं सहस्राः शरदः तपांसि ।
एतान्यपश्यन्कवयः पुराणाः स्वान्येव तेजांसि तपोमयानि ॥

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almost inalienable heritage of the Indians. Adverse stars, it is believed, can be propitiated by means of a religious ritual called Grahaśānti (ritual of propitiation of the unfavourable stars).[52] In these so-called enlightened days also even highly educated people are observed resorting to the Grahaśānti ceremony in times of serious illness in the family or other similar crisis.

ŚIKHĀBANDHANĪ VIDYĀ

This[53] was something like a cap of invisibility. The hair had to be tied in a particular manner to make the person invisible. Probably the trick was accompanied by some kind of mantra.

MAṆI, MANTRA, AUṢADHI

Various Maṇis or jewels were credited with mystic powers.[54]

Each Graha or planet of the Navagrahas which are supposed to control the destinies of man has a favourite jewel of his own. It is the belief that a person under the adverse influence of a planet has only to wear its favourite jewel, to be relieved of the evil influence. There are सर्पमणिs whose touch is said to cure a person bitten by a snake. Maṇi, Mantra and Auṣadhi (medicines) are classed together as furnishing appropriate remedies for all human ailments.

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52. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 22 : इदानीमेव दुहितरं शकुन्तलामतिथिसत्काराय नियुज्य दैवमस्याः प्रतिकूलं शमयितुं सोमतीर्थं गतः ।

53. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act II, pp. 39-40 : भगवता देवगुरुणा अपराजितां नाम शिखाबन्धिनीं विद्यामुपदिशता त्रिदशप्रतिपक्षस्यालङ्घनीये कृते स्वः ।

54. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 64 :
संगमनीयो मणिरिह शैलसुताचरणरागयोनिरयम् ।
आवहति धार्यमाणः संगममाशु प्रियजनेन ॥

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DANGEROUS EFFECTS OF THE RAINY SEASON ON LOVE-LORN PERSONS

It is supposed that the advent of the rainy season stimulates or intensifies the sexual desire.[55] This belief has almost grown into a poetical convention. नभस्, नभस्य (श्रावण, भाद्रपद), or August, September are considered more dangerous to the peace of persons separated from their mates than even आषाढ which heralds the commencement of the monsoon. The Yakṣa is afraid that his wife stood in grave peril in the नभस् (श्रावण) month. It may be true, especially in those parts of India where the summer heat is intense, that the breaking up of the monsoon brings about a sudden and happy relief, and thus stirs up the erotic impulse. The erotic lyric *Gītagovinda* begins with a description of the opening monsoon time.[56] In *Mṛcchakaṭika* the union of Cārudatta and Vasantasenā is timed to take place when the rainy season was at its height. The love-afflicted Purūravas takes the appearance of rainy clouds in the sky as a fearful calamity.[57]

THE KINGS OF ANCIENT INDIA WHO WERE OVERCONSCIOUS OF THEIR DUTIES

The kings of ancient India were brought up under the belief that their evil acts or impious conduct will bring about various calamities on their subjects. When Duṣyanta was informed that the anchorites from Kaṇvāśrama had arrived at Hastināpura and desired to see him, the fear which assailed his mind was, that due to some evil act of his, the trees in the hermitage might have ceased to grow or bear fruit.[58] In Canto XV of *Raghuvaṁśa* the son of a Brahmin is stated to have died prematurely because some

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55. *Meghadūta* I. 4 : प्रत्यासन्ने नभसि दयिताजीवितालम्बनार्थी ।
56. *Gītagovinda* 1. : मेघैर्मेदुरमम्बरं वनभुवः श्यामास्तमालद्रुमैः ।
57. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 10 : नवबारिधरोदयादहोभिर्भवितव्यं च निरातपत्वरम्यैः ।
58. *Śākuntala* V. 9 : आहोस्विदप्रसवो ममापचरितैर्विष्टम्भितो वीरुधाम् ।

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improper behaviour (अपचार) remained to be duly punished by the king.[59]

In the present enlightened times, the ruler or rulers of a country must be shrewd capable men but they need not be well-behaved or of a pious disposition. More often than not they are hypocritical, unscrupulous and self-seeking. It will certainly usher an age of happiness and peace if the ruler or rulers of a country were chosen not only for their intellectual calibre but also because they are well-principled, pious and high-souled persons.

DAŚARATHA'S LIFE SPAN EXTENDED TO 10,000 YEARS

The amazing statement appearing in v. 1 of Canto X of *Raghuvaṁśa* that Daśaratha reached an age of 10,000 years clearly testifies to the fact that our poet entertained no pretension whatsoever to historical veracity.[60] Mallināṭha quotes Āryabhaṭṭa to convey that Ayuta means 10,000 years.

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59. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 47 :
राजन्प्रजासु ते कश्चिदपचारः प्रवर्तते ।
तमन्विष्य प्रशमयेर्भवितासि ततः कृती ॥

60. *Raghuvaṁśa* X. 1 :
पृथिवीं शासतस्तस्य पाकशासनतेजसः ।
किंचिदूनमनूनर्द्धेः शरदामयुतं ययौ ॥

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CHAPTER XIII

MYTHOLOGICAL AND MYTHICAL REFERENCES

These are mostly from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, the two famous epics of the Indians, or from the *Purāṇas*.

King Rantideva is referred to in v. 45 of *Pūrva-Megha*.[1] He was the king of Daśapura being the sixth in descent from Bharata. He is mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* as being enormously rich, very religious, charitable and profuse in performing sacrifices. It is said that he had in his service 2,00,000 cooks, and 2,000 head of cattle and many other animals were daily slaughtered for feeding innumerable mendicants.[2] The river Carmaṇvatī or Chambal is said to have been formed of the blood of countless cattle, slaughtered by Rantideva either for the purpose of sacrifices or feeding the mendicants!

Udayana Vatsarāja and his anecdotes formed part of the popular folklore of those times.[3] Udayana was a prince of the lunar race being the son of Sahasrānīka. His capital was Kauśāmbī, the modern Kosam, situated on the bank of the Jumna. In the *Bṛhatkathā* of Somadeva the story of Udayana is given at great length. Vatsarāja married Vāsavadattā, the daughter of Pradyota or Caṇḍamahāsena, the sovereign of Ujjain. Vāsavadattā was betrothed by her father to king Sañjaya. In *Svapnavāsavadatta* of Bhāsa

1. *Meghadūta* I. 45 :
   व्यालम्बेथाः सुरभितनयालम्भजां मानयिष्यन्
   स्रोतोमूर्त्या भुवि परिणतां रन्तिदेवस्य कीर्तिम् ।
2. Droṇaparva ch. 67; Vanaparva ch. 294; Śāntiparva ch. 29; *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, p. 450, Wilson's edition.
3. *Meghadūta* I. 30 : प्राप्यावन्तीनुदयनकथाकोविदग्रामवृद्धान् ।

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and *Ratnāvalī* of Harṣa, Vāsavadattā figures conspicuously.

Meghadūta I. 36 refers to killing of Gajāsura by Śiva.[4] After killing the demon, Śiva is said to have danced with joy, holding aloft on his hands the skin of Gajāsura freshly stripped off his dead body and dripping with blood.

Balarāma was the elder brother of Kṛṣṇa. He was also called Haladhara or Lāṅgalin because his principal weapon was the plough which he is said to have wielded with terrific effect. He was of a very fair complexion while Kṛṣṇa was bluish dark. Balarāma is said to have been an incarnation of Śeṣa the king of serpents. He was very much addicted to drinking wine[5] and was of an open-hearted though irascible nature. His wife was Revatī, daughter of King Raivata. Balarāma maintained good relations both with the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. The Pāṇḍavas were his relations and he was the preceptor of Duryodhana in the art of using the mace गदा) in which Balarāma was recognized as a great expert and master. He did not take any part in the Mahābhārata war on either side, but repaired to the bank of the Sarasvatī river to practise penance. He was also styled Saṅkarṣaṇa (the dragger) because in his great rage, he had, at one time, dragged the river Jumna by means of his powerful plough and diverted her course to suit the personal convenience for bathing purposes. There is another reference to Balarāma in v. 59 of *Pūrva-Megha*.[6]

There is some dispute about the identity of Krauñcarandhra. Some identify it with the Niti pass, through which a traveller has to pass on his way from India to Tibet. In *Vāyupurāṇa* Krauñcarandhra is associated with the exploits of Kārtikeya.[7] It is also called Haṁsadvāra, the

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4. *Meghadūta* I. 36 :
नृत्यारम्भे हर पशुपतेरार्द्रनागाजिनेच्छां शान्तोद्वेगस्तिमितनयनं दृष्टभक्तिर्भवान्या ।

5. *Meghadūta* I. 49 :
हित्वा हालामभिमतरसां रेवतीलोचनाङ्कां
बन्धुप्रीत्या समरविमुखो लाङ्गली याः सिषेवे ।

6. *Meghadūta* I. 59 : अंसन्यस्ते सति हलभृतो मेचके वाससीव ।

7. *Vāyupurāṇa* ch. 41, vv. 34-40.

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gate of the swans who travel annually to the lake Mānasa at the beginning of the rainy season. According to Kālidāsa this pass is cut through by the arrow of Paraśurāma in order to allow him to travel southwards for the purpose of attacking and destroying the Kṣatriyas.[8]

Meghadūta I. 57 refers to the Ganges as "the flight of steps enabling the sons of king Sagara to ascend to heaven".[9] Sagara was a prince of the solar race having his capital at Ayodhyā. He is stated to have subjugated the Haihayas, his hereditary enemies, and also the Śakas, the Yavanas, the Kāmbhojas and the Pahlavas. King Sagara had two wives and from one of them he had 60,000 sons! While Sagara was performing the Aśvamedha, the sacrificial horse was stolen and carried to Pātāla (lower regions) and left where the great sage Kapila was practising penance. When the sons of Sagara in their laborious search after the animal discovered it near the hermitage of Kapila, they suspected the sage of having abducted the animal and commenced molesting and insulting him, whereupon the great ascetic in his anger burnt them to ashes. After some time Bhagīratha, a descendant of Sagara, by means of his proverbially intense and protracted austerities brought the heavenly Ganges to the earth and her miraculous waters purified the ashes of his ancestors and sent them to heaven. The vast pit, which the 60,000 sons of Sagara dug out in search of the lost horse, in course of time got filled up with water and became the ocean (Sāgara). The story is referred to in the *Harivaṁśa* and narrated in detail in the Bālakāṇḍa of *Rāmāyaṇa*.

The Ganges in this verse is called Jāhnavī, the daughter of Jahnu. When the Ganges flowed down on the earth, its course disturbed the peaceful meditation of the sage Jahnu, who therefore drank up its waters. But afterwards having relented he discharged her through his ears. There are innumerable references to the Ganges and to the

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8. *Meghadūta* I. 57 : हंसद्वारं भृगुपतियशोवर्त्म यत्क्रौञ्चरन्ध्रम् ।

9. „ I. 50 : जह्नोः कन्यां सगरतनयस्वर्गसोपानपङ्क्तिम् ।

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incidents connected with her descent to earth, throughout Sanskrit literature.

It appears that the curse of Kubera to the Yakṣa was to terminate on the eleventh day of the bright half of Kārtika. The serpent-coach of Viṣṇu is the great snake Ananta on whom Viṣṇu (the holder of Śārṅga) reclines during the four months from the eleventh day of the bright half of Āṣādha to the eleventh day of the bright half of Kārtika.[10] This is the period of Yogasamādhi of the great god and also the Dakṣiṇāyanakāla.

Rāma with Sītā when in exile passed some days on Rāmagiri, the well-known Citrakūṭa hill on the Vindhya mountain.[11] Kurukṣetra was the well-known battlefield of the Mahābhārata war where the Kṣatriya race was well-nigh decimated.[12] The subjugation of Bali the powerful king of the Rākṣasas by Vāmana, an incarnation of Viṣṇu[13], is too well-known to require further comment.

Rāvaṇa, the mighty demon, was a great devotee of Śiva and came every day to Kailāsa to worship him. One day he conceived the idea of removing Kailāsa from its site and taking it to Laṅka, his capital, in order to save himself the trouble of visiting the Kailāsa daily. By exerting all his immense strength to its utmost he slightly lifted the Kailāsa mountain, but Śiva becoming aware of Rāvaṇa's impertinent attempt, slightly pressed down his left thigh, whereby Rāvaṇa's hands were caught and crushed by the fearful weight exerted by the Great God. Rāvaṇa was ultimately released from his sorry plight by praying to and asking forgiveness of Śiva for his audacious indiscretion. The joints of Kailāsa, however, were slightly loosened from their base by Rāvaṇa's daring exploit.[14]

10. *Meghadūta* II. 47: शापान्तो मे भुजगशयनादुत्थिते शार्ङ्गपाणौ ।

11. „ I. 1 : यक्षश्चक्रे जनकतनयास्नानपुण्योदकेषु
स्निग्धच्छायातरुषु वसतिं रामगिर्याश्रमेषु ॥

12. „ I. 48 : क्षेत्रं क्षत्रप्रथनपिशुनं कौरवं तद्भजेथाः ।

13. „ I. 57 : श्यामः पादो बलिनियमनाभ्युद्यतस्येव विष्णोः ।

14. „ I. 58 : गत्वा चोर्ध्वं दशमुखभुजोच्छ्वासितप्रस्थसंधेः ।
Raghuvaṁśa IV. 80.

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The oldest of the patriarchs or forefathers of humanity is said to be Manu. The word Mānava which denotes mankind is derived from Manu. He partakes both of human and divine nature. He is called Vaivasvata Manu (the son of Vivasvat, the sun). He is also called Svāyambhuva, i.e., the son of Svayambhū, i.e., Brahmā. He is often referred to in the Ṛgveda as the progenitor of the human race. The manner in which he created mankind is recited in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. He is held in the highest respect (यन्मनुरवदत्तद्भेषजम्). He is also reputed to be the first king.[15] *Manusmṛti* is reputed to be the first attempt to codify the laws for governing mankind. The author of *Manusmṛti* is, however, neither Vaivasvata nor Svāyambhuva Manu. The date of *Manusmṛti* is supposed to be the 5th century A.D.[16]

The moon is traditionally reputed to have been born from the water oozing out of the eyes of the sage Atri.[17] The moon also is said to be one of the fourteen jewels that came out of the ocean when it was churned by the god and the demons.

In *Kumārasambhava* Canto X is described how the semen thrown in Agni by Śiva was transmitted by the former to the Ganges and thereafter was received by the six divine matrons. This is the theme of the *Kumārasambhava*.[18]

Aparānta, the southwest seashore region of India especially the Konkan tract, has been formed by the recession of the sea from the Sahya mountain range which at one time formed part of the western boundary of the Indian continent. Tradition gives Paraśurāma the credit

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15. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 11 :
वैवस्वतो मनुर्नाम माननीयो मनीषिणाम् ।
आसीन्महीक्षितामाद्यः प्रणवश्छन्दसामिव ॥
Raghuvaṁśa I. 17.

16 Dowson's *Hindu Mythology & Religion*, p. 201.

17. *Raghuvaṁśa* II. 75 : अथ नयनसमुत्थं ज्योतिरत्रेरिव द्यौः ।
See Dowson, p. 32.

18. *Raghuvaṁśa* II. 75 : सुरसरिदिव तेजो वह्निनिष्ठ्यूतमैशम् ।

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of making the sea to recede from the Sahya mountain by the power of his arrow and of making a gift of such land recovered from the sea to certain Brahmins of his own creation out of the corpses of foreigners shipwrecked on the Indian sea-shore. Konkan is therefore called Paraśurāma-Bhūmi or Paraśurāma-Kṣetra.[19]

Ahalyā was the daughter of the God Brahmā who proclaimed that he who would circumambulate the earth in twenty-four hours would wed his daughter. As Ahalyā was very beautiful, all the powerful princes of the earth as well as gods like Indra took part in the race round the earth. Indra who was mounted on his famous Airāvata elephant was hopeful of coming out victorious in the contest. Meanwhile the sage Gautama having walked round a cow, came to the God Brahmā and claimed the bride. The Śāstras say that he who circumambulates a cow gets the merit of going round the earth. The word "गौः" means the earth as well as a cow. The God Brahmā therefore having been thus cornered had to give Ahalyā in marriage to Gautama. Indra having been disappointed was not likely to forget and forgive his discomfiture and waited for his revenge. One day when Gautama was away from the hermitage he (Indra) assumed Gautama's form and appearance and presenting himself before Ahalyā claimed the privileges of a husband. Ahalyā had to submit to his overtures and while the couple was engaged in an unlawful intimacy, Gautama returned to the hermitage and knocked at the closed door. Indra surprised in his criminal act and apprehensive of the well-merited curse of the sage, tried to escape from the scene of his crime in the form of a crow. He was however recognized by Gautama and cursed that his body would be afflicted by a thousand sores. As Ahalyā also was considered guilty of shielding her lover and concealing her infidelity from her husband, she was turned into a stone. After the lapse of a long time, she was

19. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 58 :

अवकाशं किलोदन्वान् रामायाभ्यर्थितो ददौ ।
अपरान्तमहीपालव्याजेन रघवे करम् ॥

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restored to her original form by Rāma by touching her with his holy feet.[20]

Nahuṣa was a well-known king of the lunar race. He was the son of Āyu and the grandson of Purūravas (the hero of *Vikramorvaśīya*) and was the father of Yayāti. He was asked to occupy the throne of Indra when the latter was engaged in doing penance to cleanse himself of the sin of killing Vṛtra who was a Brahmin by caste. While in temporary occupation of Indra's throne Nahuṣa conceived the evil idea of winning over Indrāṇī to himself and made open overtures to her. Finding herself in a difficult position she requested Nahuṣa to come to her palace in a palanquin borne by seven great sages including Agastya. While being thus conveyed to his destination and being impatient of reaching there as early as possible, he worried and railed at the sages, crying aloud "सप, सर्प" (move on, move on) and went to the extent of kicking with his foot the sage Agastya, who was one of such bearers, in order to make him move faster. The sage lost his proverbial patience at this outrageous insolence and cursed Nahuṣa to be turned into a serpent (सर्प).[21] Nahuṣa, Purūravas and Yayāti made themselves very unpopular with the Brahmins.

Once upon a time the gods and the demons churned the ocean. The mountain Meru was used as the churning rod and Śeṣa the king of serpents as the rope. In the course of such churning, they extracted fourteen jewels (precious articles) from the ocean.[22]

The Vālakhilyas are said to have sprung from the hairs

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20. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 34 :
प्रत्यपद्यत चिराय यत्पुनश्चारु गौतमवधूः शिलामयी ।
स्वं वपुः स किल किल्बिषच्छिदां रामपादरजसामनुग्रहः ॥
See Dowson, p. 8.

21. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 36 :
भ्रूभेदमात्रेण पदान्मघोनः प्रभ्रंशयां यो नहुषं चकार ।

22. *Kumārasambhava* I. 2 :
यं सर्वशैलाः परिकल्प्य वत्सं मेरौ स्थिते दोग्धरि दोहदक्षे ।
भास्वन्ति रत्नानि महौषधीश्च पृथूपदिष्टां दुदुहुर्धरित्रीम् ॥

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Raghuvaṁśa XV. 10 may perhaps be a veiled reference to certain very delicate shades of colour which defy detection or analysis by our modern instruments.[23]

Satī was the daughter of Dakṣa Prajāpati and was given in marriage to God Śaṅkara. The relations of Dakṣa with his son-in-law were somewhat of a strained nature. When Dakṣa performed the great sacrifice, he invited all the gods and sages but purposely omitted Śaṅkara from the list of the invited guests. Satī however insisted on visiting her father's place for witnessing the celebration of the sacrifice, although Śaṅkara tried to dissuade her from doing so. Satī when she visited her father's place, was grossly insulted by him and owing to the rage and mortification at the insult she threw herself into the fire and perished.[24] When Śaṅkara heard of the fate of his dear wife, he attacked Dakṣa and killed him and destroyed the sacrifice. Satī thereafter reincarnated herself as Pārvatī the daughter of Himālaya and married Śaṅkara which marriage partly forms the theme of *Kumārasambhava.*,

In very ancient times the mountains had wings and used to move about from place to place with disastrous results to the inhabitants of the earth who invoked the protection of Indra from that ever present menace. Indra therefore cut off the wings of the mountains by his Vajra and made them stationary, in which condition they are at present.[25] The Maināka mountain sought refuge in the vast bosom of the ocean to avoid the clipping of his wings and thus saved himself from such mutilation. The wings of the mountains lopped off by Indra took the form of clouds known as पुष्करावर्तक which inundate and overwhelm the earth at the time of the Pralaya.[26]

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23. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 10 : विरराज रथप्रष्ठैर्वालखिल्यैरिवांशुमान् ।
24. *Kumārasambhava* I. 21 :
सती सती योगविसृष्टदेहा तां जन्मने शैलवधूं प्रपेदे ।
25. *Kumārasambhava* I. 20 :
क्रुद्धेऽपि पक्षच्छिदि वृत्तशत्रावविदनाज्ञं कुलिशक्षतानाम् (मैनाकमसूत) ।
26. *Meghadūta* I. 6 : जातं वंशे भुवनविदिते पुष्करावर्तकानाम् ।

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In v. 17 of the fifth Act of *Mālavikāgnimitra* there is a reference to the submarine fire which is supposed to be ever burning in the heart of the ocean. The story is related in the *Mahābhārata* that the sons of Kṛtavīrya with the object of destroying the descendants of Bhṛgu, killed even the children in the mother's womb. One of the women of the family in order to preserve her embryo secreted it in her thigh (ऊरु) and the child when born became known as Aurva (ऊरुसंभव). Beholding him the sons of Kṛtavīrya were struck with blindness. As he threatened to consume the whole world he was requested to cast himself into the ocean where he is said to exist even to this day as a terrible fire with the face of a horse.[27]

Triśaṅku was a celebrated king of the solar race and was the king of Ayodhyā. He was the father of the famous Hariścandra. He was wise, pious and a just king, but his chief fault was that he was inordinately fond of his body which was very beautiful. He requested Vasiṣṭha, his family priest, to perform a sacrifice whereby he could go to heaven in his mortal body, but Vasiṣṭha refused to do so. Next he requested the hundred sons of Vasiṣṭha who also refused to comply with his absurd request. At one time Triśaṅku had laid Viśvāmitra under a great obligation. Therefore the latter consented to perform the required sacrifice. By his great spiritual power Viśvāmitra lifted Triśaṅku to the skies in his mortal body. He soared higher and higher but when his head struck against the vault of the heaven, the angry gods hurled him downwards to the earth. Viśvāmitra, however, arrested his downward fall and Triśaṅku was ordered by him to stay where he was, with the result that he remains to this day suspended midway between the heaven and the earth with his head downwards as a constellation of the southern hemisphere.[28]

Among others v. 20 of Act III of *Śākuntala* must be a

27. *Mālavikāgnimitra* V. 17 :
यस्यापवृष्टः प्रभवस्त्वमुच्चैरग्नेरपां दग्धुरिवोरुजन्मा ।

28. *Śākuntala* Act II, p. 82 : त्रिशङ्कुरिवान्तराले तिष्ठ ।
See Dowson, p. 288.

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reference to Yayāti and Śarmiṣṭhā, who were married by the Gāndharva form of marriage. Later on Mārīca blesses Śakuntalā that she would be as dear to Duṣyanta as Śarmiṣṭhā was to Yayāti. Śarmiṣṭhā was the mother of Puru the ancestor of Duṣyanta. Both Yayāti's first wife, the Brahmin girl Devayānī, as well as Śarmiṣṭhā the daughter of Vṛṣaparvan appear to have been married to him by the Gāndharva form of marriage. Another such instance was Vāsavadattā, the daughter of Pradyota, who was married to Vatsarāja Udayana in the same way. In comparatively recent times Prithviraj and Samyogita, the daughter of Jayachand, were united in the same form of marriage. Arjuna's marriages with Ulūpī and Citrāṅgī, the Nāga girls, and Bhīma's marriage with the Rākṣasa girl Hiḍimbā are similar instances.[29]

Vālyā a fisherman by caste was a noted robber, free-booter and a great pest to the travellers whom he robbed and killed. He thereby amassed great wealth. One day Nārada the divine sage happened to be passing by that way when Vālyā as usual attacked him. He was, however, arrested in his nefarious attempt by the power of Nārada's great spiritual eminence. Nārada spoke kindly to him and inquired of him why he had taken to such a sinful way of life. Vālyā informed him that his object was to enrich and make happy his wife and children. Nārada further questioned him whether his wife and children were willing to take up their due share of the consequences of his sinful acts. Vālyā requested him to wait for some time and went and inquired of his wife and children whether they were willing to take up their due share of the sins he was daily committing for their sake but they refused point-blank to have anything to do with his misdeeds. Vālyā was thereupon afflicted with great remorse and requested Nārada to show him the way to redeem and save himself from the grave consequences of his sinful life. Nārada's only advice

29. *Śākuntala* III. 20 :
गान्धर्वेण विवाहेन बह्व्यो राजर्षिकन्यकाः ।
श्रूयन्ते परिणीतास्ताः पितृभिश्चाभिनन्दिताः ॥

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was that he should go on repeating the word "Rāma". Somehow or other owing to long continued habit instead of Rāma he pronounced "Marā" (मरा i.e. die). Still, so great was his concentration and devotion that he attained the highest yogasamādhi, "Marā" was soon changed to "Rāma" and he became completely oblivious of the existence of his mortal body as well as of the lapse of time, so that round about him sitting in a steady pose in Yogic contemplation grew Valmīkas or anthills and he therefore came to be known as Vālmīki the great sage.

Once upon a time, he saw the heart-rending spectacle of a hunter killing one of a pair of Krauñca (crane) birds engrossed in the sexual joys of each other's company and was deeply moved by the agonizing cries of the surviving mate at the all-too-sudden and tragic fate of its companion. Vālmīki spontaneously uttered a curse against the cruel hunter in a highly polished and poetic language which so pleased Brahmā, that he appeared before him, congratulated him on his having attained to the highest linguistic competence and inspiration, making him fit to compose a great epoch-making epic and ordered him therefore to sing the glorious life of Rāma the great hero who was his contemporary. Vālmīki thereupon wrote the world-famous *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Vālmīki himself figures conspicuously in *Rāmāyaṇa* as Sītā in her exile stayed in his Āśrama. Lava and Kuśa, Rāma's sons, were born there and were brought up, tutored and educated by the sage.

The above references, it will be seen, are mostly from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, often from the *Purāṇas* and other well-known folklore like the *Bṛhatkathā*. The existence of the Aurva fire in the ocean, the mountains taking refuge therein, the Vālakhilyas accompanying the sun in his daily march, may be allegorical references to certain phenomena known only to the ancient Indo-Aryans.

Yajña (sacrifice) is personified in the *Purāṇas* as the son of Ruci and the husband of Dakṣiṇā. He had the head of a deer and was pursued by Vīrabhadra—a manifestation of

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Śaṅkara himself—on the occasion of Dakṣa's sacrifice.[30]

God Brahmā had three daughters variously named, viz., Vāk or Sarasvatī (speech), Sandhyā (twilight), Śatarūpā (of hundred forms). Sandhyā gave up her body after the birth of ten Prajāpatis i.e. mythical progenitors of the human race.[31]

30. *Śākuntala* I. 6 : मृगानुसारिणं साक्षात्पश्यामीव पिनाकिनम् ।
Raghuvaṁśa XI. 44 : विद्रुतक्रतुमृगानुसारिणं येन बाणमसृजद्वृषध्वजः ।
See Dowson, p. 371.

31. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 52.
See Dowson, p. 57.

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Chapter XIV

HIGHLIGHTS OF POETICAL CRAFTSMANSHIP

Kālidāsa is deservedly famous for his Upamās or similies. Similies include Utprekṣā and Dṛṣṭānta by implication. Other figures of speech, especially Arthāntaranyāsa, the poet has handled with equal adroitness and discrimination. For aptness, clarity and arresting rhythm of phrase he is equally matchless. A few extracts of his writings are given here as samples of his great poetical craftsmanship.

When Vasiṣṭha's cow who was attended upon by king Dilīpa returned home from the forest, the queen went forth to welcome her; so that the king was following her and the queen stood facing her. She thus stood between the illustrious couple and looked charming like the twilight (सन्ध्या) as it posed between the departing day and the advancing night. The cow was tawny in colour like the twilight hour. The mighty king is appropriately compared to the day and the virtuous and gentle queen to the restful and silent night.[1]

Kālidāsa was very fond of drawing upon the weird beauty of the waning night, with the pallid lacklustre moon and rapidly disappearing stars, in anticipation of the rise of the young sun, as well as on splendours of the young night with the resplendent lunar orb and clearly visible galaxy of bright stars, for some of his fine imageries. In *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 2 the queen Sudakṣiṇā in her advanced pregnancy wearing on her emaciated body only a few ornaments, with her pallid face comparable to a Lodhra flower,

1. *Raghuvaṁśa* II. 20 :
पुरस्कृता वर्त्मनि पार्थिवेन प्रत्युद्गता पार्थिवधर्मपत्न्या ।
तदन्तरे सा विरराज धेनुर्दिनक्षपामध्यगतेव सन्ध्या ॥

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is compared to the fast waning night nearing daybreak, with a few stray stars visible here and there along with the lacklustre moon. The word प्रभातकल्पा is used with great skill. The rise of the glorious and refulgent sun in the one case as well as the birth of the illustrious king Raghu in the other, were both fast approaching.[2]

In *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 37 there is a striking simile from real life. Kalama is a kind of corn which when it grows to a certain height in the ground where its seeds are sown must be pulled out, laid flat on the site and subsequently replanted in another soil. If the blades are allowed to grow where their seeds are first sown they would not become fruitful. Similarly Raghu forcibly uprooted the neighbouring princes (dethroned them), made them prostrate themselves before him and thereafter reinstated them on their thrones. In this way only, like the Kalamas, they became fruitful and paid rich tribute and precious presents to the conqueror. This simile may also be used in the case of girls who unless they are removed from the parental family and given in marriage elsewhere are not likely to become fruitful (bear children).[3]

Those who have carefully observed the faces of the Iranians (Mar. इराणी) will fully appreciate the wonderful appropriateness of this description.[4] The faces of many

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2. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 2 :
शरीरसादादसमग्रभूषणा मुखेन सालक्ष्यत लोध्रपाण्डुना ।
तनुप्रकाशेन विचेयतारका प्रभातकल्पा शशिनेव शर्वरी ॥
Kumārasambhava IV. 46; V. 44.
Raghuvaṁśa VIII. 74.
Śākuntala III. 14.
Meghadūta II. 21.

3. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 37 :
आपादपद्मप्रणताः कलमा इव ते रघुम् ।
फलैः संवर्धयामासुरुत्खातप्रतिरोपिताः ॥

4. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 63 :
भल्लापवर्जितैस्तेषां शिरोभिः श्मश्रुलैर्महीम् ।
तस्तार सरघाश्यामैः स क्षौद्रपटलैरिव ॥

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males of the race have a thick skin deeply marked with indents, sponge-like in appearance and of yellow colour and with their closely cut beards they bear a near resemblance to a honeycomb partially covered with black bees. The close observation of the poet and his skill in presenting a vivid picture by means of a few terse and striking expressions is almost unequalled.

Another wonderful simile. Aja was accommodated by the king of Vidarbha to the beautiful new tents specially erected for him. He is compared to the God of Love coming to reside in a young fresh and adolescent body. In view of the approaching Svayaṁvara of the princess, this simile appears still more charming.[5]

As Aja felt great anxiety as to whether he was likely to be the lucky bridegroom-elect of the beautiful princess for whose hand almost all the potentates of India had gathered together in Vidarbha, sleep would not come to him for a long while. Sleep (निद्रा) in this instance is compared to a love-sick girl who in spite of her eagerness to meet her lover tarries long, not being certain of the lover's feelings towards herself and of his possible response and welcome. Young girls are often needlessly suspicious and diffident and this causes a lot of worry to their lovers.[6] In *Śākuntala* Duṣyanta thus remonstrates with his beloved: "Oh, thou diffident and timid girl, here I am impatient for thy company while thou art needlessly tormenting thyself with vain fear of repudiation on my part."

It is a time-honoured poetical convention to compare the face of a young woman to the moon. The poet has made use of this somewhat trite simile to bring out an incomparably beautiful imagery. The royal bards address the sleeping Aja as follows with a view to wake him up in time: "Oh prince! thy face has become the object of

5. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 63:
रम्यां रघुप्रतिनिधिः स नवोपकार्यां बाल्यात्परामिव दशां मदनोऽध्युवास।

6. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 64:
भावावबोधकलुषा दयितेव रात्रौ निद्रा चिरेण नयनाभिमुखी बभूव।
Śākuntala III. 11.

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eternal obsession and passion to the Goddess Lakṣmī (the Goddess of Beauty). Having been overpowered by sleep during night thou hast woefully neglected her. In her disconsolate condition, she was therefore seeking some slight relief and consolation by gazing at the full moon who somewhat resembles thy face, but alas! the moon also owing to the fast approaching daybreak has lost his beauty and lustre. Therefore, Oh kind prince, take pity on the poor forlorn goddess and awake! Oh, awake! !"[7]

The poet appears to be very fond of comparing the lovely eyes of a beautiful woman (in the present instance it is the eyes of a young man) to Kunda flowers in close contact with bees. The bees represent the moving black pupils of the eye and the rest of the whitish portion is compared to the delicate Kunda flower. This idea is repeated in *Meghadūta*. In the present verse the combination of fancy and phrase is almost perfect.[8]

When the much desired object is unattainable, a disconsolate person seeks solace by contacting other objects which bear some resemblance to the one goal of his desire. This idea appears in various guises in Sanskrit literature. Here the morning breeze deprived of the inimitable fragrance issuing forth from Aja's mouth tries to enjoy a secondhand and inferior smell from flowers which it plucks off from their loose stems or from lotuses freshly opening

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7. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 67 :
निद्रावशेन भवताप्यनवेक्षमाणा पर्युत्सुकत्वमबला निशि खण्डितेव ।
लक्ष्मीर्विनोदयति येन दिगन्तलम्बी सोऽपि त्वदाननरुचिं विजहाति चन्द्रः ॥

8. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 68 :
तद्वल्गुना युगपदुन्मिषितेन तावत्सद्यः परस्परतुलामधिरोहतां द्वे ।
प्रस्पन्दमानपरुषेतरतारमन्तश्चक्षुस्तव प्रचलितभ्रमरं च पद्मम् ॥
Meghadūta I. 47 :
कुन्दक्षेपानुगमधुकरश्रीमुषामात्मबिम्बं पात्रीकुर्वन्दशपुरवधूनेत्रकौतूहलानाम् ।
Meghadūta I. 35 :
वेश्यास्त्वत्तो नखपदसुखान्प्राप्य वर्षाग्रबिन्दू-
नामोक्ष्यन्ते त्वयि मधुकरश्रेणिदीर्घान्कटाक्षान् ।

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to the rays of the rising sun.[9] The same idea is conveyed in *Meghadūta* II. 41.

Raghuvaṁśa VI. 67 is an instance of a very realistic simile. When a very powerful light is carried along a royal road on a pitch dark night (very probably in those days most streets were not lighted at night as they are now), that portion of the street in immediate vicinity of the strong light looks festive and cheerful, but as the light passes onwards, the same tract looks fearfully dismal and deserted owing to sudden contrast. In the same way when Indumati stood in front of a prince while Sunandā as usual sang his fulsome praises, his face was alight with the hope that Indumatī's choice may fall on him; but when the princess politely bypassed him his mortification knew no bounds and he wore a hang-dog look![10]

The extraordinary good fortune of Aja in winning Indumatī's hand was deeply resented by the rest of the disappointed princes, who had hardly yet forgotten their defeat and humiliation at the hands of his father (Raghu). They therefore secretly conspired to attack Aja on his way back to Ayodhyā and wrest from him his beautiful bride. While they were the guests of the bride's father, they studiously maintained a friendly and happy exterior so that Aja may have no suspicion of their nefarious plan. They appeared, says the poet, like the placid and inviting surface of a lake, in the interior of which lurk dangerous and greedy sharks waiting to rend to pieces the unwary swimmer.[11]

The Plakṣa tree (Mar. पिंपळ) is considered a dangerous

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9. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 69 :
वृन्ताच्छ्लथं हरति पुष्पमनोकहानां संसृज्यते सरसिजैरुणांशुभिन्नैः ।
स्वाभाविकं परगुणेन विभातवायुः सौरभ्यमीप्सुरिव ते मुखमारुतस्य ॥
Meghadūta II. 41 : श्यामास्वङ्गं चकितहरिणीप्रेक्षणे दृष्टिपातम् ।

10. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 67 :
संचारिणी दीपशिखेव रात्रौ यं यं व्यतीयाय पतिंवरा सा ।
नरेन्द्रमार्गाट्ट इव प्रपेदे विवर्णभावं स स भूमिपालः ॥

11. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 30 :
लिङ्गैर्मुदः संवृतविक्रियास्ते ह्रदाः प्रसन्ना इव गूढनक्राः ।

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plant to be allowed to grow in the vicinity of a building. The roots of this tree are said to be able to break through and penetrate the hardest soil and gradually undermine the foundations of the building with the result that the structure itself may ultimately crash down to the ground. The king's malaise engendered by the shock of his wife's sudden and tragic death, like the roots of the Plakṣa tree, steadily but progressively undermined his health and brought about his untimely death. This process of insidiously and clandestinely working underground and the inevitability of the ultimate disaster are the common ingredients of the उपमेय and the उपमान in this instance.[12]

Raghuvaṁśa XI. 20 gives an Utprekṣā combined with a clever Śleṣa. The simple statement is that the demoness Tāḍakā having been pierced to the heart by the terrible arrow of Rāma, died covered with evil-smelling blood. The Utprekṣā fancies her as an Abhisārikā (wanton woman) proceeding at night time (निशाचरी) to the abode of her lover (death or the God of Death), pierced to the heart by the arrow of the God of Love (Rāma) and having her body annointed with the fragrant sandal paste (the stinking blood with which she was covered). The Śleṣa is on the following words: निशाचरी (demoness or night wanderer), गन्धवत् (fragrant or stinking) and जीवितेश (lover or the God of Death).

This verse, however, is an unhappy mixture of Śṛṅgāra and Bībhatsa.[13]

When Daśaratha's army approached the precincts of Mithilā, Janaka's capital, it surrounded the city and committed havoc and devastation to the suburban gardens by their rough and wanton usage. If a fraction of that damage were committed by an unfriendly power, the people of the great city would have risen against it as one man and

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12. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 93 : प्लक्षप्ररोह इव सौधतलं बिभेद ।

13. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 20 :
रामस्मरशरेण ताडिता दुःसहेन हृदये निशाचरी ।
गन्धवद्रुधिरचन्दनोक्षिता जीवितेशवसतिं जगाम सा ॥

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avenged the insult. As, however, it was the army of the father-in-law of their beloved princess, the people quietly put up with, nay enjoyed, the loss and inconvenience. The simile in this instance is very much characteristic of the poet's genius. If a young woman is accidentally jostled against in a crowd by a stranger, she will glare at him like an infuriated she-cat. But her pet lover is privileged to take any amount of liberty with her, submit her to a rough, violent and prolonged usage even beyond her endurance. Not only does she tolerate it, she even enjoys it! It is not the damage done but who does it that matters! It is noteworthy in this connection that upto quite recent times it was a custom on the Konkan side that a newly wedded son-in-law and his relations were privileged to roughly unburden the gardens of the father-in-law of their fruits and it was treated as a pleasant joke.[14]

In *Raghuvaṁśa* XII. 1 an old man who has lost zest for worldly enjoyment and whose allotted span of life has almost come to a close is compared to a lamp on the break of the dawn whose oil is spent up and wick burnt out overnight. Bhartṛhari also describes old age as the period when all craving for physical enjoyment completely disappears.[15]

In this verse the words स्नेह (1. affection, love; 2. oil), दशा (1. life's appointed span; 2. wick of a lamp), निर्वाण (1. death; 2. going out of the lamp), are very cleverly used giving rise to a striking शब्दचमत्कृति. The figure of speech here is Utprekṣā combined with Śleṣa.

Daśaratha in recognition of some signal service rendered by his wife Kaikeyī had conferred on her two boons which she had kept in reserve for a long time and whose fulfilment she demanded at the time of Rāma's installation as

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14. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 52 : प्रीतिरोधसमसहिष्ट सा पुरी स्त्रीव कान्तपरिभोगमायतम्।

15. ,, XII. 1 :
निर्विष्टविषयस्नेहः स दशान्तमुपेयिवान्।
आसीदासन्ननिर्वाणः प्रदीपार्चिरिवोषसि॥
Vairāgyaśataka : निवृत्ता भोगेच्छा पुरुषबहुमानो विगलितः।

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a Yuvaraja with the object of preventing him being raised to that position and of sending him in exile for fourteen years, so that the empty throne should be occupied by her son Bharata. These boons are compared to two fearful cobras resting underground for a long time and forced to the surface out of their holes, when such holes became chokeful with copious rainwater.[16] This simile does credit to the supreme genius of the poet.

Raghuvaṁśa XV. 16 is an instance of Bhayānaka and Bībhatsa (sentiments of terror and disgust). Lavaṇa the demon is compared to the funeral pyre which is dusky with emerging volumes of black smoke, full of the stink of burnt fat and flesh, red at the top due to rising flames and surrounded by vultures and other birds of prey. Lavaṇa's colour of the body was dusky like smoke, he smelt all over of putrid flesh, his hair were of tawny (murky reddish) colour and he was surrounded by carnivorous demons. This may be deservedly called पूर्णोपमा.[17]

Śambūka who being a वृषल (son of a father who belonged to one of the three upper classes by a Śūdra woman) had no right to practise austerities, which he was found practising in breach of the customary law. As he used to hang himself head downwards from a tree over fire ignited and burning just below his suspended head, most of his beard had been singed and destroyed from the sparks bursting forth from such fire. His face therefore is aptly compared to a lotus whose filaments were destroyed in winter by the constant fall of snow.[18]

Raghuvaṁśa XVIII. 19 gives a beautiful Utprekṣā. The

16. *Raghuvaṁśa* XII. 5 :
सा किलाश्वासिता चण्डी भर्त्रा तत्संश्रुतौ वरौ।
उद्ववामेन्द्रसिक्ता भूर्बिलमग्नाविवोरगौ ॥

17. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 16 :
धूमधूम्रो वसागन्धी ज्वालाबभ्रुशिरोरुहः।
क्रव्याद्गणपरीवारश्चिताग्निरिव जंगमः ॥

18. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 52 :
स तद्वक्त्रं हिमक्लिष्टकिञ्जल्कमिव पङ्कजम्।
ज्योतिष्कणाहतश्मश्रु कण्ठनालादपातयत् ॥

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king Śila was much addicted to sensual pleasures. The spiteful hag—old age—although herself totally incapable of sexual enjoyment (अरतिक्षमा) with purposeless malice whisked away the pleasure-loving king from the company of young beautiful women. A truly "dog-in-the-manger" attitude of mind on the part of the wicked old woman! What the poet means to convey is that the king although his attachment to carnal pleasures was unabated had compulsorily to wean himself from female company due to sheer impotency on account of old age.[19]

Kālidāsa is a masterhand in describing the exuberance and splendour of adolescence in growing boys and girls. He says that youthful beauty is like honey which, however, can only be tasted by the eye. It is like the flower of the tree of love and the first sprouting foliage of sex passion. It is an adornment of the entire body, spontaneous and artless ; it is a kind of inebriation which has nothing to do with spirituous liquors and it is the only weapon of the God of Love which is not fashioned out of a flower. (Mythologically the God of Love has only five arrows and they are all made of certain specified flowers.)[20]

Kumārasambhava I. 24 is an instance of a truly arresting Upamā.[21] Menā (the mother of Pārvatī and the wife of Himālaya) shone as it were with the newly born resplendent daughter of hers (Pārvatī) lying beside her, like some flank of the Vidūra mountain (well-known for its mines of precious stones) by a dazzling jewel-slab

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19. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVIII. 19 :
तं रागबन्धिष्ववितृप्तमेव भोगेषु सौभाग्यविशेषभोग्यम् ।
विलासिनीनामरतिक्षमापि जरा वृथा मत्सरिणी जहार ॥

20. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVIII. 52 :
अथ मधु वनितानां नेत्रनिर्वेशनीयं मनसिजतरुपुष्पं रागबन्धप्रबालम् ।
अकृतकविधि सर्वाङ्गीणमाकल्पजातं विलसितपदमाद्यं यौवनं स प्रपेदे ॥
Kumārasambhava I. 31 :
असंभृतं मण्डनमङ्गयष्टेरनासवाख्यं करणं मदस्य ।
कामस्य पुष्पव्यतिरिक्तमस्त्रं बाल्यात्परं साऽथ वयः प्रपेदे ॥

21. *Kumārasambhava* I. 24 : विदूरभूमिर्नवमेघशब्दादुन्मिच्चया रत्नशलाकयेव ।

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emerging to sight from its surface torn asunder by a ear-splitting thunderclap of the opening monsoon. Here Menā is compared to the Vidūrabhūmi (the surface of the famous Vidūra mountain pregnant with precious jewels), the thunderclap of the bursting monsoon to the virile and youthful sex activity of the mighty Himālaya and the wonder-child Pārvatī to a resplendent slab of precious stone suddenly emerging out to view!!

In *Kumārasambhava* III. 25 we find a very happy fancy. The advent of spring in the middle of दक्षिणायन (progress of the sun to the south of the equator during the period of the winter solstice) was clearly untimely and was manoeuvred by the Gods for a special purpose. The Southern quarter (दक्षिणा) which is compared to a courteous and polite lady seeing that her lover the Sun in violation of his usual convention (समय) was about to proceed to the North—a wanton courtezan in the keeping of Kubera, emitted a sigh of disappointment and pain. What is meant is that while दक्षिणायन was in progress, the spring breezes from the Malaya mountain began to blow and these are fancied to be the sighs of pain of the disappointed wife (Southern quarter) who is deserted by her lord and lover the Sun in favour of a wanton woman contrary to his usual practice.[22]

Kumārasambhava III. 76 is a very good instance of the grandeur and telling effect with which notable situations and incidents are described by the poet.[23] Pārvatī was stricken nearly dead by fear, disappointment and humiliation, by the lightning-like destruction of the God of Love who in a way risked his life for riveting the amorous desires of the Great God on her. Her mighty and giant-bodied father, taking pity on her condition, lifted her in

22. *Kumārasambhava* III. 25 :
कुबेरगुप्तां दिशमुष्णरश्मौ गन्तुं प्रवृत्ते समयं विलङ्घ्य।
दिग्दक्षिणा गन्धवहं मुखेन व्यलीकनिश्वासमिवोत्ससर्ज ॥

23. *Kumārasambhava* III. 76 :
सपदि मुकुलिताक्षीं रुद्रसंरम्भभीत्या दुहितरमनुकम्प्यामद्रिरादाय दोर्भ्याम्।
सुरगज इव विभ्रत्पद्मिनीं दन्तलग्नां प्रतिपथगतिरासीद्वेगदीर्घीकृताङ्गः ॥

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his great arms as if she were a little child and hied away with long rapid strides to put as much distance as possible between himself and that fateful place, giving rise to a thrilling situation whose effect is enhanced by a masterly simile. Himālaya is compared to a powerful elephant who lifts a lotus bud from its stalk and holding it aloft in his trunk stampedes away, his body stretched to its utmost, by the very force of his terrific speed. By comparing Pārvatī to a delicately lifted lotus bud the poet tries to convey the helplessness of the fainting beautiful girl due to the great shock to which she was subjected.

Kumārasambhava V. 40 : A clever hit at the impertinently inquisitive and interfering mentality of the Brahmin, especially priestly class. They like to poke their noses everywhere.[24]

Rati compares the sudden passing off of Madana to the accumulated water of a reservoir which rapidly escapes out, owing to a big breach in the dam, leaving the lotuses therein high and dry.[25]

The wood of the Śamī tree has extremely tough fibres.[26] Duṣyanta says that Kaṇva who has employed a delicate girl like Śakuntalā for the hard task of watering the trees of the hermitage must be utterly devoid of commonsense and proper discrimination and therefore pictures the eccentric sage as trying to cut the hard twigs of the Śamī tree by means of a tender petal of the blue lotus.

The dazzling lightning is always born in the high heavens and cannot spring out of the gross earth. In the same way a divinely beautiful damsel like Śakuntalā cannot be born out of a mere mortal woman. It is but natural

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24. *Kumārasambhava* V. 40 : द्विजातिभावादुपपन्नचापलः ।

25. „ IV. 6 :
क्व नु मां त्वदधीनजीवितां विनिकीर्य क्षणभिन्नसौहृदः ।
नलिनीं क्षतसेतुबन्धनो जलसंघात इवासि विद्रुतः ॥

26. *Śākuntala* I. 16 : ध्रुवं स नीलोत्पलपत्रधारया शमीलतां छेत्तुमृषिर्व्यवस्यति ।

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that a celestial nymph should be the source of her being.[27]

The mind is very rebellious and unruly and it is not easy to turn it away from its cherished obsession. Duṣyanta is overdue to return to his capital but his love-sick mind persists in hovering round about the hermitage of Kaṇva yearning for a sight of the fascinating Śakuntalā. The banner of a moving chariot may be forcibly carried forward against the wind but all the same it tries to run back in the opposite direction.[28]

Śakuntalā was the daughter of a celestial courtezan. After having been deserted by her mother, she was found and adopted by the ascetic Kaṇva. Duṣyanta compares her to a delicate Navamālikā flower falling down from its loose stem off the parent creeper to the bosom of the rough and knotty Arka tree.[29]

Śākuntala V. 19[30] describes the indecision and confusion of mind such as is described by the poet in another place. (See *Kumārasambhava* V. 85.) In the early hours of the morning the Kunda flower is full of frost accumulated overnight. The greedy bee though longing to dip inside the bud tempted by its fragrant honey is prevented from doing so on account of the frozen icicles whose touch he abhors. Duṣyanta is forcibly attracted by the unrivalled beauty of Śakuntalā but was repelled by the fact that she was with child, as he thought, from another man.

Duṣyanta says that Śakuntalā by her wanton and shameless conduct in claiming him as the father of her

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27. *Śākuntala* I. 22 :
मानुषीषु कथं वा स्यादस्य रूपस्य संभवः ।
न प्रभातरलं ज्योतिरुदेति वसुधातलात् ॥

28. *Śākuntala* I. 30 :
गच्छति पुरः शरीरं धावति पश्चादसंस्तुतं चेतः ।
चीनांशुकमिव केतोः प्रतिवातं नीयमानस्य ॥

29. *Śākuntala* II. 8 : अर्कस्योपरि शिथिलं च्युतमिव नवमालिकाकुसुमम् ।

30. „ V. 19 :
भ्रमर इव विभाते कुन्दमन्तस्तुषारं न च खलु परिभोक्तुं नैव शक्नोमि हातुम् ।

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child not only disgraced her own family but tried to ruin his reputation as an honest and strictly moral person. The river in violent floods in the act of breaking down its banks not only soils its own water, but also pulls down an inoffensive tree.[31]

By means of this Dṛṣṭānta, Duṣyanta cleverly killed two birds in one shot. Firstly he illustrates and supports his theory that women although untutored are endowed with an inborn cunning which a mere male has to acquire by arduous study and bitter experience and secondly he insinuates that Śakuntalā being the off-spring of a परभृता (a prostitute) is by nature cunning and unscrupulous. A female cuckoo also is called परभृता as she is brought up by other birds (the crows) with whose eggs those of the cuckoo are cleverly mixed up. The traditional belief that the cuckoo by mixing her eggs with those of the crow, manages to have her young ones reared and taken care of by the latter bird under the honest belief that they belong to itself is hardly borne out by facts. The king also covertly refers to the disreputable parentage of Śakuntalā as also the heartless conduct of her wanton mother in abandoning her in the forest after her birth.[32]

A diamond which is cut up and polished becomes somewhat smaller in size but its brightness increases owing to the संस्कार (polishing). Kañcukin says that although the king was emaciated and pale owing to sleepless nights and the longing due to unsatisfied love, still owing to his innate majesty and beauty his loss of weight is not easily discernible.[33] It is also said that emaciation due to love-longing

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31. *Śākuntala* V. 21 :
व्यपदेशमाचिलयितुं किमीहसे जनमिमं च पातयितुम् ।
कूलंकषेव सिन्धुः प्रसन्नमम्भस्तटतरुं च ॥
For a similar idea see *Ṛtusaṁhāra* II. 7.

32. *Śākuntala* V. 22 :
प्रागन्तरिक्षगमनात्स्वमपत्यजातमन्यैर्द्विजैः परभृताः खलु पोषयन्ति ।

33. *Śākuntala* VI. 6 :
तेजोगुणादात्मनः संस्कारोल्लिखितो महामणिरिव क्षीणोऽपि नालक्ष्यते ।

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invests a person with a peculiar charm. Kāmandakī in *Mālatīmādhava* describes the love-lorn Mālatī as कलाशेषा मूर्तिः शशिन इव नेत्रोत्सवकरी, i.e. as charming to the eye as the last digit of the moon.

The king Duṣyanta is very much intrigued and perplexed at his peculiar state of mind in completely forgetting everything about his beloved wife, being of course unaware of Durvāsas's curse. He says: Śakuntalā herself came to him and tried her best to revive his sagging memory by referring to certain unforgettable incidents of their short-lived courtship and intimacy but recollection of any kind refused to dawn upon him. Curiously enough, however, the mere sight of the ring given to her at the time of what was then intended as a temporary parting, suddenly flooded his memory with every minute detail of the wonderful dramatic episode of his association with Śakuntalā. His confused mind was unable to solve the mystery. A man afflicted with great thirst has as it were bypassed on his way a river full of fresh, sweet water without tasting even a drop of it, but soon thereafter finds himself panting after a mirage with a view to slake his agonizing thirst; or he is confronted with an elephant in full view, but cannot then come to a decision as to what sort of animal it is, but subsequently the sight of the mere imprints of his feet on the soft-ground convince him regarding his true identity. Such was, he says, the inexplicable state of his mind—तथाविधो मे मनसो विकारः.[34]

A wee bit of a child yet containing the germ or embryo of a mighty king destined to rule the world is compared to a small spark of fire ready to flare up in a vast conflagration under favourable circumstances, a tiny seed implanted in

34. *Śākuntala* VI. 16 :
साक्षात्प्रियामुपगतामपहाय पूर्वं चित्रार्पितां पुनरिमां बहु मन्यमानः ।
स्रोतोवहां पथि निकामजलामतीत्य जातः सखे प्रणयवान्मृगतृष्णिकायाम् ॥
Śākuntala VII. 31 :
यथा गजो नेति समक्षरूपे तस्मिन्नपक्रामति संशयः स्यात् ।
पदानि दृष्ट्वा तु भवेत्प्रतीतिस्तथाविधो मे मनसो विकारः ॥

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congenial soil destined in course of time to grow into a giant Banyan tree.[35]

It is a superstitious belief that the fingers of the hands of a would-be emperor (Cakravartin) are joined together by a web-like texture. Duṣyanta compares the tender reddish paws of the child Bharata, fashioned as above to indicate his future unique greatness, to a single opening lotus, the distances between whose petals become unnoticeable owing to the flaming light of the breaking dawn beating against them.[36]

In his reply to the compliment paid to him by Citraratha for rescuing Urvaśī from the clutches of the wicked demon Keśin, the king Purūravas with becoming modesty attributes the achievement to the power of Indra alone and refuses to take any credit to himself. The Dṛṣṭānta or illustration is worth notice. The king observes that even the echo of the lion's roar, reverberating through the mountain caverns is enough to break the courage of the elephants. The credit of it goes to the lion, not to the mere echo nor to the mountain cavern. The king pleads that he is only the reflection of Indra's might and that therefore he does not deserve credit for the heroic act.[37]

The night had just fallen. The king Purūravas moving in the palace is surrounded by female attendants holding aloft lighted lamps in their hands. He is compared by the poet to a moving mountain (before his wings were clipped by Indra) whose flanks are covered with flowering Karṇikāra trees. The slender girls in attendance on the king are compared to young Karṇikāra saplings, the lamps

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35. *Śākuntala* VII. 15 :
महतस्तेजसो बीजं बालोऽयं प्रतिभाति मे ।
स्फुलिङ्गावस्थया वह्निरेवापेक्ष इव स्थितः ॥

36. *Śākuntala* VII. 16 :
अलक्ष्यपत्रान्तरमिद्धरागया नवोषसा भिन्नमिवैकपङ्कजम् ।

37. *Vikramorvaśīya* I. 17 :
ननु वज्रिण एव वीर्यमेतद्विजयन्ते द्विषतो यदस्य पक्ष्याः ।
वसुधाधरकन्दराविसर्पी प्रतिशब्दो हि हरेर्हिनस्ति नागान् ॥

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borne by them to Karṇikāra flowers and the tall majestic king to a moving mountain.[38]

Darkness is fancied by Kālidāsa to be the loose, ink-black tresses of the night. The rising moon, her lover, in dispelling the darkness appears, as it were, to collect together and tie up in a knot her dishevelled hair and kiss the night with such intensity of passion that she is made to close her eyes. The petals of the red lotus which close up on the rising of the moon are imagined to be the eyes of the night. In the first of the verses quoted below the eastern quarter (हरिवाहना दिक्) is substituted in place of the night (रजनी) which however leaves the main simile untouched. The word सरोजलोचन is used in a double sense.[39]

Vikramorvaśīya IV. 52 is a fine instance of Rūpaka. The rapid and swollen river is compared to the angry Urvaśī. Its ripples and eddies represent the arched crooked brows of the wrathful woman, the disturbed line of birds on her surface to her displaced girdle, the foam on her waters to her dishevelled garment which she pulls up from time to time to keep it in order, her rapid and turbulent flow to the fast and disorderly gait of an incensed shrew. The king fancies that his beloved has assumed the form of a river. The idea of the first couplet in this verse is amplified and improved in *Meghadūta* I. 40-41. See also *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 66 where Urvaśī is similarly compared to a creeper.[40]

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38. *Vikramorvaśīya* III. 3 :
परिजनवनिताकरार्पिताभिः परिवृत एष विभाति दीपिकाभिः ।
गिरिरिव गतिमानपक्षमादानुतटपुष्पितकर्णिकारयष्टिः ॥

39. *Vikramorvaśīya* III. 6 :
अलकसंयमनादिव लोचने हरति मे हरिवाहनदिङ्मुखम् ।
Kumārasambhava VIII. 63 :
अङ्गुलीभिरिव केशसंचयं संनियम्य तिमिरं मरीचिभिः ।
कुड्मलीकृतसरोजलोचनं चुम्बतीव रजनीमुखं शशी ॥

40. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 52 :
तरङ्गभ्रूभङ्गा क्षुभितविहगश्रेणिरशना विकर्षन्ती फेनं वसनमिव संरम्भशिथिलम् ।
पदावर्तं यान्ती स्खलितमभिसंधाय बहुशो नदीभावेनेयं ध्रुवमसहना सा परिणता ॥

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The tree scorched by the heat felt immensely relieved by the opportune shower of the opening monsoon, but alas! immediately thereafter a bolt from the blue rives it asunder. The king in a similar way was united with his beloved son but immediately to be subjected to the unutterable agony of permanent separation from his beloved Urvaśī.[41]

Another fine imagery is noticed in *Mālavikāgnimitra* III. 21. The queen Irāvatī accidentally discovering the love intrigue of the king with a fresh young beauty flies into fury, and between tears of great mortification essays to strike her guilty husband with her jewelled girdle which has slipped from her waist in her great excitement. The king aptly compares her to a row of black monsoon clouds (this is perhaps a hit at her dusky colour or darkly frowning face), which is about to chastise the Vindhya mountain with a streak of lightning. Vindhya might have been brought into the simile to indicate the majestic and grand form of the king. The मेघराजी sheds drops of water, the queen is shedding tears. A jewelled girdle moved with rapidity may easily create the illusion of a streak of lightning.[42]

Mālavikāgnimitra IV. 16 sticks in memory with its beautiful musical rhythm quite apart from the fine Dṛṣṭānta in its concluding couplet.[43] The king hypocritically

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Vikramorvaśīya IV. 66 :

तन्वी मेघजलार्द्रपल्लवतया धौताधरेवाश्रुभिः
शून्येवाभरणैः स्वकालविरहाद्विश्रान्तपुष्पोद्गमा ।
चिन्तामौनमिवास्थिता मधुलिहां शब्दैर्विना लक्ष्यते
चण्डी मामवधूय पादपतितं जातानुतापेव सा ॥

41. *Vikramorvaśīya* V. 16 :

व्यावर्तितातपरुजः प्रथमाभ्रवृष्ट्या वृक्षस्य वैद्युत इवाग्निरुपस्थितोऽयम् ।

42. *Mālavikāgnimitra* III. 21 :

बाष्पासारा हेमकाञ्चीगुणेन श्रोणीबिम्बादप्युपेक्षाच्युतेन ।
चण्डी चण्डं हन्तुमभ्युद्यता मां विद्युद्दाम्ना मेघराजीव विन्ध्यम् ॥

43. *Mālavikāgnimitra* IV. 16 :

कदा सुखं वरतनु कारणादृते तवागतं क्षणमपि कोपपात्रताम् ।
अपर्वणि ग्रहकलुषेन्दुमण्डला विभावरी कथय कथं भविष्यति ॥

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pretends to appeal to the sense of fairplay of the angry queen. He says : "Hitherto you have never been displeased with me without a good reason, why then this needless exhibition of temper ? Have you ever observed the moon undergoing an eclipse out of its appointed time ? Why then is your moon-like face obscured with causeless anger ?"

A love-lorn person is supposed to be almost insane. According to a well-established poetical convention, the hero in Vipralambhaśṛṅgāra can be made to address inanimate and non-intelligent objects, without the poet being accused of impropriety. In *Meghadūta* the Yakṣa is afflicted with such mental aberration. In *Śākuntala* the king charges the ring with utter want of discrimination and good taste in slipping off the tapering beautiful finger of his beloved. In *Vikramorvaśīya* Purūravas in his deranged state of mind goes on making inquiries as to the whereabouts of Urvaśī from birds, elephants and clouds etc. In *Meghadūta* there is a deliberate apologia of the poet for his apparently fantastic attempt to send a message with a cloud.[44]

The river Revā (Narmadā) flows through the Vindhya mountain whose surface is uneven and full of big craggy boulders. Revā therefore has a zigzag course to run in those difficult mountain tracts. The poet fancies Vindhya to be a big black elephant and the current of the river an artful design painted on his body. (In India it is still the custom to paint elephants' bodies with various elaborate and skilful designs.)[45]

In Sanskrit literature the rivers are fancied to be the wives of the ocean to which they proceed to join on issuing forth from their parent source. The cloud, however, is regarded as their lover who enjoys them on their way to

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44. *Meghadūta* I. 5 :
कामार्ता हि प्रकृतिकृपणाश्चेतनाचेतनेषु ।

45. *Meghadūta* I. 19 :
रेवां द्रक्ष्यस्युपलविषमे विन्ध्यपादे विशीर्णां
भक्तिच्छेदैरिव विरचितां भूतिमङ्गे गजस्य ।

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the sea by sucking water from their basins. This highly fanciful imagery is completed by filling in the details. The ripples rising on the surface of the river represent the sportive amorous movements of her brows, the slushing sound produced by its water touching its banks is her sweet, indistinct language of love and excitement, the row of birds moving on her surface is her girdle, the eddies are her deep navel-cavity, the rapidly moving Śaphara fishes her winning side-glances, the sandy banks her buttocks, and the shallow water nearest the bank encumbered by thick reeds is the end of her garment held loosely by her fingers (the reeds) to prevent it from being wholly snatched away by the wanton and impetuous cloud (her lover). We have already noticed a verse embodying this idea in *Vikramorvaśīya*. In this latter verse the foam arising on its surface is represented to be her garment. This is a wild poetical fantasy which however arrests and fascinates the mind.[46]

The imagery immediately above referred to is carried further in *Meghadūta* I. 29. Sindhu (river) has become emaciated (has become dried up) owing to the long absence of the cloud (rains) and also pale on account of the yellow-coloured dried leaves of the surrounding trees falling in its

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46. *Meghadūta* I. 24 :

तीरोपान्तस्तनितसुभगं पास्यसि स्वादु यस्मा-
त्सभ्रूभङ्गं मुखमिव पयो वेत्रवत्याश्चलोर्मि ।

Meghadūta I. 41 :

तस्याः किंचित्करधृतमिव प्राप्तवानीरशाखं
नीत्वा नीलं सलिलवसनं मुक्तरोधोनितम्बम् ।
प्रस्थानं ते कथमपि सखे लम्बमानस्य भावि
ज्ञातास्वादो विवृतजघनां को विहातुं समर्थः ॥

Vikramorvaśīya IV. 52 :

तरङ्गभ्रूभङ्गा क्षुभितविहगश्रोणिरसना ।

It is difficult to believe that our poet used the indecnet and unsavoury expression "विवृतजघना" which in all probability is an interpolation. The word very probably was "विपुलजघना". It is obvious that a river which is विवृतजघना (i.e. whose basin is *dried up* or *exposed*) cannot attract a cloud.

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dry bed. The cloud is requested to meet this love-sick river and restore her to her normal health.[47]

In *Meghadūta* I. 63 there is one of the grandest fanciful conception regarding the situation of the supposed Alakā on the upper flanks of the Kailāsa mountain, with the Ganges loosely and irregularly flowing round about it. Alakā is imagined to be a young woman lying in sweet abandon on the lap of her lover Kailāsa, with her garment (the flowing Ganges) in a disordered state and wearing on her head (the tops of her lofty sky-kissing palaces) a pearl netting in the shape of clouds oozing white drops of water. A young woman resting leisurely and lovingly on the lap of her lover in her privacy is not particular as to the correct position of her garments—she may even leave some interesting parts of her body deliberately exposed to view as a strong sex-appeal to her lover.[48]

Meghadūta II. 5 is a beautiful instance of the figure of speech Bhrāntimat. The lovers with their passions inflamed, impatiently try to pull off the loosened garments of their girls who overwhelmed with shame and trepidation at the prospect of utter nakedness in full light, hastily tried to extinguish the lamps by throwing handfuls of red powder at them, forgetting in their excitement and confusion that their privacy was lighted, not by ordinary oil lamps, but by resplendent jewels which were used for lighting purposes, and which could not be extinguished like ordinary oil lamps.

Incidentally in addition to Bhrāntimat, the figure of speech Udātta is brought in use as showing the prosperity

47. *Meghadūta* I. 29 :
वेणीभूतप्रतनुसलिलासावतीतस्य सिन्धुः
पाण्डुच्छाया तटरुहतरुभ्रंशिभिर्जीर्णपर्णैः ।

48. *Meghadūta* I. 63 :
तस्योत्सङ्गे प्रणयिन इव स्रस्तगङ्गादुकूलां
न त्वं दृष्ट्वा न पुनरलकां ज्ञास्यसे कामचारिन् ।
या वः काले वहति सलिलोद्गारमुच्चैर्विमाना
मुक्ताजालग्रथितमलकं कामिनीवाभ्रवृन्दम् ॥

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and riches of the Yakṣas, who could afford to make use of jewels to serve the purpose of the oil-lamps.[49]

A somewhat similar situation is depicted in *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 7. Pārvatī when disrobed, hurriedly closed both the eyes of Śaṅkara with her hands forgetting that he had a powerful third eye which was intently focussed on her charms.

Meghadūta II. 6 is an instance of another highly fanciful conception.[50] The palaces of Alakā were seven-story high and owing to their height, their tops were on a level with the clouds. Cloudy vapour, therefore, found its way into the interior of their top-most parts by the force of the breeze, with the result that the pictures with which they were decorated were sullied by moisture. On this simple incident Kālidāsa bases the following wonderful fancy. The clouds are represented as wayward libertines who led by their pimps (procurers) the breezes, enter the private apartments of respectable families, pollute with their libidinous touch the spotless virgins (the pictures) and after such shameless and immoral conduct, fully conscious of their guilt, cleverly assume the form of smoke or vapour (as a disguise) and hastily emerge out of the palaces exhausted and enervated on account of their recent sexual excitement ! !

The long black tresses of the Yakṣa's wife (a Proṣitabhartṛkā) due to their not being properly oiled and braided

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49. *Meghadūta* II. 5 :

नीवीबन्धोच्छ्वसितशिथिलं यत्र विम्बाधराणां
क्षौमं रागादनिभृतकरेष्वाक्षिपत्सु प्रियेषु ।
अर्चिस्तुङ्गानभिमुखमपि प्राप्य रत्नप्रदीपान्
ह्रीमूढानां भवति विफलप्रेरणा चूर्णमुष्टिः ॥

50. *Meghadūta* II. 6 :

नेत्रा नीताः सततगतिना यद्विमानाग्रभूमी-
रालेख्यानां नवजलकणैर्दोषमुत्पाद्य सद्यः ।
शङ्कास्पृष्टा इव जलमुचस्त्वादृशा जालमार्गै-
र्धूमोद्गारानुकृतिनिपुणा जर्जरा निष्पतन्ति ॥

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are falling in disorder on her beautiful face which was resting on her hand and therefore being partially concealed from view created the illusion of the moon pursued and deprived of its lustre by the invading clouds.[51]

A veritable midsummer-night's dream![52] The moon traversing the sky kept on intently gazing on the beautiful faces of young women, sleeping peacefully in their white palaces (on the open terraces owing to summer heat), and thereby getting afflicted by intense, passionate and fruitless longing, becomes pallid and lacklustre at the close of the night. Mere persistent gazing at beautiful faces whose owners are beyond reach, brings its own punishment!

The night during the autumnal season, which grows in length day by day is compared to a youthful adolescent girl who wears precious ornaments (in the shape of numerous stars), whose moon-like face is bright and beautiful (the moon being bright and clear owing to the absence of the clouds), who wears a white glamorous garment (fashioned of moonlight) and is day by day growing in size and beauty.[53]

Love is restless in the flashing eyes of young women under the influence of drink, it is pale in their cheeks, hard in their breasts, slender in the middle portion of their body and fat and firm in their thighs. What the poet means to convey is that lovely young women under the influence of drink have flashing, restless eyes, intense longing makes their cheeks pale and flushing, bursting youth makes their breasts hard, their waists slender and their thighs fleshy

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51. *Meghadūta* II. 21 :
हस्तन्यस्तं मुखमसकलव्यक्ति लम्बालकत्वा-
दिन्दोर्दैन्यं त्वदनुसरणक्लिष्टकान्तेर्बिभर्ति ।

52. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* I. 9 :
सितेषु हर्म्येषु निशासु योषितां सुखप्रसुप्तानि मुखानि चन्द्रमाः ।
विलोक्य नूनं भृशमुत्सुकश्चिरं निशाक्षये याति हि येव पाण्डुताम् ॥

53. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 7 :
तारागणप्रवरभूषणमुद्वहन्ती मेघावरोधपरिमुक्तशशाङ्कवक्त्रा ।
ज्योत्स्नादुकूलममलं रजनी दधाना वृद्धिं प्रयात्यनुदिनं प्रमदेव बाला ॥

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and firm.[54]

The figure of speech here is Ullekha otherwise called Bhāvaśabala. A very fine instance of this figure of speech is *Uttararāmacarita* III. 13.

Besides similies (उपमा) for which the poet is justly famous, he had wide acquaintance with other well-known figures of speech which he has handled with great skill and appropriateness throughout his writings. A few instances are given below.

Svabhāvokti : One of such figures of speech is Svabhāvokti. *Śākuntala* I. 7, describing with remarkable amplitude and vividness of details the pitiful plight of a deer flying for its life when hotly pursued by the king, is a fine instance of the poet's remarkable skill of realistic description. Similarly the picture of Nandin, Śiva's bull in *Kumārasambhava* I. 56 is equally striking and brings before the mental vision a bull full of animal spirits and great might, who throws, as it were, a defiant challenge to all and sundry and sends forth a terrific bellow incensed at the roar of the king of the jungle.

Still more beautiful is the portraiture of the God of Love when in his thoughtless vanity he struts forth in the presence of the Lord Indra with his bow, whose curved ends were fashioned out of the arched brows of young beautiful maidens, suspended round his shoulders bearing the permanent impress thereon of the bangles of Rati (owing to her habitual clasping of his neck), accompanied by his constant companion and friend the Vernal Season holding in his hand a fresh sprouting blossom of the mango tree.[55]

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54. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 10 :
नेत्रेषु लोलो मदिरालसेषु गण्डेषु पाण्डुः कठिनः स्तनेषु ।
मध्येषु निम्नो जघनेषु पीनः स्त्रीणामनङ्गो बहुधा स्थितोऽद्य ॥

55. *Kumārasambhava* II. 64 :
अथ स ललितयोषिद्भ्रूलताचारुशृङ्गं रतिवलयपदाङ्के चापमासज्य कण्ठे ।
सहचरमधुहस्तन्यस्तचूताङ्कुराग्रः शतमखमुपतस्थे प्राञ्जलिः पुष्पधन्वा ॥

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Vyatireka: For most things there is a standard of beauty fixed by poetical convention; e.g., the full moon for the face of a beautiful woman, the plumage of the peacock for the tresses of a young woman adorned with flowers, etc. The poet in rare instances comes to the conclusion that such standard of comparison (उपमान) is inferior to the thing compared (उपमेय). In delineating the matchless beauty of the maiden Pārvatī the poet observes that although the trunk of an elephant and the column of a plantain tree are usually the standards of perfection to which the thighs of a woman are compared, in the case of Pārvatī, the elephants' trunk being hard and rough in its texture and the plantain column being unpleasantly cold to the touch, these are much inferior to the thighs of that divine girl. The figure is Vyatireka which implies inversion in the respective values of the उपमेय and the उपमान.[56]

Smaraṇa: An instance of Upamā and Smaraṇa (Remembrance) is provided by *Meghadūta* II. 14 where the sight of the Megha (cloud) with lightning playing round about it, puts the Yakṣa in mind of the artificial pleasure-mount in his garden, fashioned out of blue stones and surrounded by golden-coloured plantain trees.[57]

Sahokti: An example of Sahokti is furnished by *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 38 below. Indumatī collapsed to the earth due to contact with the garland of divine flowers, bringing down with her also her beloved husband, just as the burning wick of the lamp falling to the ground brings down with it the drop of oil with which it is soaked. As the wick and the burning oil are inseparable and must come down together, so also the queen and the king being strongly attached to each other, the sudden collapse of one

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56. *Kumārasambhava* I. 36:
नागेन्द्रहस्तास्त्वचि कर्कशत्वादेकान्तशैत्यात्कदलीविशेषाः।
लब्ध्वापि लोके परिणाहि रूपं जातास्तदूर्वोरुपमानबाह्याः॥
Meghadūta II. 41.

57. *Meghadūta* II. 14.

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cannot but bring about that of the other.[58]

Paryāyokta: *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 28 is a clever instance of Paryāyokta. Speaking of the king of Aṅga country, Sunandā the maid of honour of Indumatī says: "This king makes the women of his enemies shed copious tears, which, rolling down over their breasts, restore back to them, as it were, their valuable pearl necklaces taken by him (as the conquerer's booty), freed however from the strings in which they were woven."[59]

Virodhābhāsa: *Raghuvaṁśa* X. 24 is a verse panegyrizing Viṣṇu. The God is unborn (i.e. his origin is not known), still he creates (incarnates) himself (for the protection of the pious and the destruction of the wicked). He is free from action (i.e. स्थाणु), yet he kills his enemies. He is immersed in yogic sleep (योगनिद्रा), yet he is vigilant and watchful (in the preservation of his creation).[60]

Sama: This figure of speech is used when two objects of equal merit are brought together.[61]

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58. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 38:
वपुषा करणोज्झितेन सा निपतन्ती पतिमप्यपातयत् ।
ननु तैलनिषेकबिन्दुना सह दीपार्चिरुपैति मेदिनीम् ॥

59. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 28:
अनेन पर्यासयताश्रुबिन्दून्मुक्ताफलस्थूलतमान्स्तनेषु ।
प्रत्यर्पिताः शत्रुविलासिनीनामुन्मुच्य सूत्रेण विनैव हाराः ॥

60. *Raghuvaṁśa* X. 24:
अजस्य गृह्णतो जन्म निरीहस्य हतद्विषः ।
स्वपतो जागरूकस्य याथार्थ्यं वेद कस्तव ॥

61. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 85:
शशिनमुपगतेयं कौमुदी मेघमुक्तं जलनिधिमनुरूपं जह्नुकन्यावतीर्णा ।
इति समगुणयोगप्रीतयस्तत्र पौराः श्रवणकटु नृपाणामेकवाक्यं विवव्रुः ॥
Śākuntala V. 15:
त्वमर्हतां प्राग्रसरः स्मृतोऽसि यच्छकुन्तला मूर्तिमती च सत्क्रिया ।
समानयंस्तुल्यगुणं वधूवरं चिरस्य वाच्यं न गतः प्रजापतिः ॥

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Parikara (Succession) : The drops of the insetting rains falling over the face of Pārvatī, rested awhile on her eyelashes, beat down on her lips, were reduced to sprays by falling on her hard breasts, and completely disintegrating themselves on entering the sharp curves of the middle part of her body, at last disappeared altogether in her deep navel.[62]

Parivṛtti (Exchange): The द्रुत्र (Śaṅkara in disguise) inquires of Pārvatī why she had in the first flush of youth exchanged her ornaments for the bark garment which is only meant for old age.[63]

Samuccaya : This figure of speech is used when although the existence of one cause is sufficient to bring about an effect, there are others also which contribute to the same effect. In *Kumārasambhava* VI. 82 the poet enumerates the various factors each one of which is sufficient in itself to confer ineffable glory and importance on the Himālaya. Pārvatī of matchless beauty is the bride, the lofty Himālaya himself is the dispenser of her hand, the illustrious sages have brought about the union, and above all the bridegroom is Śaṅkara himself.[64]

Bhāvika (Vision) : This figure of speech is used when a wonderful object or incident whether past or future is so represented as to strike the mind as if it were present before the eyes.[65]

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62. *Kumārasambhava* V. 24 :
स्थिताः क्षणं पक्ष्मसु ताडिताधराः पयोधरोत्सेधनिपातचूर्णिताः ।
वलीषु तस्याः स्खलिताः प्रपेदिरे चिरेण नाभिं प्रथमोदबिन्दवः ॥

63. *Kumārasambhava* V. 44 :
किमित्यपास्याभरणानि यौवने धृतं त्वया वार्धकशोभि वल्कलम् ।

64. *Kumārasambhava* VI. 82 :
उमा वधूर्भवान्दाता याचितार इमे वयम् ।
वरः शंभुरलं ह्येष त्वत्कुलोद्भूतये विधिः ॥

65. *Śākuntala*. II. 12 :
दर्भाङ्कुरेण चरणः क्षत इत्यकाण्डे तन्वी स्थिता कतिचिदेव पदानि गत्वा ।
आसीद्विवृत्तवदना च विमोचयन्ती शाखासु वल्कलमसक्तमपि द्रुमाणाम् ।

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The Kālidāsian literature is a veritable rich mine of matchless jewels of literary craftsmanship. It is an extremely difficult task to pick and choose and single out samples among this vast store of such unique literary gems. In offering to the readers the above illustrations our object is to stimulate and encourage the study of the great poet and induce the readers to go through, if not the whole, at any rate a portion of his wonderful writings.

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CHAPTER XV

RELIGION AND METAPHYSICS

In his attitude towards religion Kālidāsa was never a fanatic or a violent partisan of a particular sect or creed. The conventional religious beliefs were good enough for him and he never tried to probe into them. Some think he was a staunch Śaivite, but even if it was so, he never carried his Śaivism to the extent of traducing or disparaging Vaiṣṇavism or other sects. His conciliatory attitude is evident from *Kumārasambhava* VII. 44.[1] He has definitely expressed his belief that one Supreme God has for the convenience of the cosmos divided himself into three forms to suit his different functions and none of these forms is superior or inferior or anterior or posterior to the others.

It is true that in the benedictory verses at the beginning of his dramatic compositions the deity which is invoked is Śaṅkara. That may be because apart from his own personal predilections the majority of his audience and patrons were perhaps Śaivites. It is significant that he has impartially composed panegyrics to all the three manifestations of the Supreme Being, i.e., Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śaṅkara. In *Kumārasambhava* the second canto begins with the eulogy of Brahmā[2], who is called Trimūrti, i.e., comprising within himself all the three aspects of divine nature manifested for the proper regulation of the three fundamental cosmic qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, although he was a

1. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 44 :
एकैव मूर्तिर्बिभिदे त्रिधा सा सामान्यमेषां प्रथमावरत्वम् ।
विष्णोर्हरस्तस्य हरिः कदाचिद्ब्रह्मास्तयोस्तावपि धातुराद्यौ ॥

2. *Kumārasambhava* II. 4 :
नमस्त्रिमूर्तये तुभ्यं प्राक्सृष्टेः केवलात्मने ।
गुणत्रयविभागाय पश्चाद्भेदमुपेयुषे ॥

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single entity in the beginning of the creation. That gives the final quietus to any possible clash or conflict between the followers of Śiva and Viṣṇu.

In Canto X of *Raghuvaṁśa* the poet eulogizes Viṣṇu very much in the same manner.[3] In Canto VI of *Kumārasambhava* appears a similar panegyric of Śaṅkara placed in the mouth of the Saptarśis.[4] In all these panegyrics the essential identity of the three divine forms is implicitly assumed.

On the whole, Kālidāsa appears to support the Viśiṣṭādvaita doctrine and Bhaktimārga which he thinks most beneficial and convenient so far as the masses were concerned.[5]

As regards his religio-philosophical ideology, Kālidāsa fully endorses and follows the doctrine of the reincarnation of souls as well as that of Karmavāda i.e. the regulation of an individual's earthly life mostly by the good or bad results of his past actions.

The cosmology of the Hindu starts with the theory that the Supreme Being emerging out of his yogic trance manifests or throws himself out in the shape of a vast concrete creative effort which we call the Universe. This doctrine is named Sphuraṇavāda. The individual soul which is a mere emanation from such manifestation thus finds himself thrown in the vortex of created things and starts his upward career which in course of his varied and prolonged

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3. *Raghuvaṁśa* X. 16 :
नमो विश्वसृजे पूर्वं विश्वं तदनु बिभ्रते ।
अथ विश्वस्य संहर्त्रे तुभ्यं त्रेधास्थितात्मने ॥

4. *Kumārasambhava* VI. 23 :
किं येन सृजसि व्यक्तमुत येन बिभर्षि तत् ।
अथ विश्वस्य संहर्ता भागः कतम एष ते ॥

5. *Vikramorvaśīya* I. 1 :
स स्थाणुः स्थिरभक्तियोगसुलभो निःश्रेयसायास्तु वः ।
Raghuvaṁśa X. 29 :
केवलं स्मरणेनैव पुनासि पुरुषं यतः ।
अनेन वृत्तयः शेषा निवेदितफलास्त्वयि ॥

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experiences of pleasure and pain, during numberless existences, is bound to lead him back in the long run to his parent source, the Supreme Being, from which he first sprang into existence. This alternating round of evolution and absorption is the basis of the Indian theory of cosmology.[6] The individual soul in the course of his evolution, during his innumerable incarnations, has complete freedom of volition and action subject however to the forces of good or evil which he himself has set in motion by his past actions. In this way the conflict and controversy of Fatalism versus Free Will which has baffled the best intellects of the modern world are sought to be fully explained and reconciled. The gross inequality, physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual, between one individual and another which inevitably results in vast differences and various grades of human existence and which is the cause of so much strife and bitterness finds a satisfactory and convincing solution in the doctrines of Punarjanmavāda and Karmavāda.

The remarkable absence of class conflict in India prior to the advent of the British rule, which has surprised foreigners, is mainly due to the conviction deeply implanted in the mind of an average Indian that his misfortunes and troubles in this life are entirely due to the evil effects of

6. *Kumārasambhava* II. 8 :
स्वकालपरिमाणेन व्यस्तरात्रिंदिवस्य ते ।
यौ तु स्वप्नावबोधौ तौ भूतानां प्रलयोदयौ ॥
Manusmṛti I. 52 :
यदा स देवो जागर्ति तदैव चेष्टते जगत् ।
यदा स्वपति शान्तात्मा तदा सर्वं प्रलीयते ॥
Bhagavadgītā VIII. 17-19 :
सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्यद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।
रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥
अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वे प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।
राज्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥
भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।
राज्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥

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his past actions in previous births and not to anybody else. The pleasure and pain which comes to the lot of a human being is not caused by another. It is a wrong notion that they emanate from an outside source.[7] This has been his mental attitude for thousands of years, so long as he was kept away from the disquieting and disruptive influences of the West with its attendant evils of Marxism, Bolshevism, Socialism and other pernicious isms and schisms. That a man gets what he deserves, is true in more senses than one. In the West a person is disposed to hold all others except himself responsible for his or her unsatisfactory condition. If as a result of his पूर्वकर्म he is born in the world as a blockhead or an imbecile, he still insists as a matter of right to possess all or as many as possible of the comforts and blessings earned by his far more intelligent, enterprising and industrious brother. This unreasonable mental attitude necessarily gives rise to isms of an embroiling and explosive character. The Indian is often accused of being a fatalist —which again is a radical misconception. In *Kumārasambhava*, Pārvatī boldly asserts that there is no limit to the achievement of a person's ambition if he or she has a sufficiently strong will power. Water running from a higher to a lower level can never be turned backwards.[8] The only limitations and handicaps are those created by himself or herself due to his or her past actions which however can be combated and even conquered by hard penance and unremitting labour. An expert and intrepid swimmer can make headway even against strong adverse currents and even whirlpools.

As stated above certain forces and tendencies good or bad accompany a person ever since his birth in this world. Pārvatī quickly regained mastery over all lores and sciences which she had already learnt in her previous birth.[9] That

7. सुखस्य दुःखस्य न कोऽपि दाता, परो ददातीति कुबुद्धिरेषा ।
8. *Kumārasambhava* V. 5 :
क ईप्सितार्थस्थिरनिश्चयं मनः पयश्च निम्नाभिमुखं प्रतीपयेत् ।
9. *Kumārasambhava* I. 30 :
स्थिरोपदेशामुपदेशकाले प्रपेदिरे प्राक्तनजन्मविद्याः ।

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the boy Jñāneśvara commenced writing his wonderful commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* at a very early age and completed that stupendous work when he was barely out of his teens is a striking illustration of the existence of past births and of the Saṁskāras or impressions gathered by the soul in the course of his continuous sojourn from incarnation to incarnation. The world furnishes numerous instances of this kind and it is also supposed that our relations and friends in the present birth are ordained to be those who are bound down to us by obligations incurred in bygone births.[10] This invisible tie which binds one soul to another is known as ऋणानुबन्ध (the continuity of the bond of obligations and debts). Śakuntalā tries to explain the harsh and unjust conduct of her husband towards herself by her firm belief that at that time some past evil act committed by her was ripe to bear its appropriate fruit.[11] So also Sītā after her cruel exile by Rāma consoles herself in a similar way.[12] This doctrine of कर्मविपाक, due to the usage of thousands of years, is deeply ingrained in the consciousness of an average Indian and is a powerful factor in reconciling him to the woes, privations and inequities of this imperfect world. The कर्मs or actions are divided into three categories : (1) *Sañcita* : the aggregate stock of actions or in other words the total bank balance available for future use; (2) *Prārabdha* : that which is in actual use having been ripe for fruition : it is with regard to this that it is said in *Uttararāmacarita* : "Who can prevent the results of past acts when they become ripe to bear their appropriate fruit ?"[13]; (3) *Kriyamāṇa* : that which is earned or

10. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 15 :
मनो हि जन्मान्तरसंगतिज्ञम् ।

11. *Śākuntala* Act VII, p. 253 :
नूनं मे सुचरितप्रतिबन्धकं पुराकृतं तेषु दिवसेषु परिणाममुखमासीद्येन सानुक्रोशोऽप्यार्यपुत्रो मयि विरसः संवृत्तः ।

12. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 62 :
ममैव जन्मान्तरपातकानां विपाकविस्फूर्जथुरप्रसह्यः ।

13. *Uttararāmacarita* VII. 4 :
को नाम पाकाभिमुखस्य जन्तोर्द्वाराणि दैवस्य पिधातुमीष्टे ।

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performed at the present moment which will naturally form part of the Sañcita i.e. permanent stock or capital to await its fulfilment in due time.

In Canto VIII of *Raghuvaṁśa* Kālidāsa takes an opportunity of expressing his views regarding the nature of the earthly life of embodied beings as well as of what is ordinarily known as "death". Vv. 83 to 89 contain a brilliant exposition of the ever-defying and eternal problem regarding the nature of "Life" and "Death". King Aja who is heart-broken and woe-begone at the sudden and mysterious death of his wife and would have gladly put an end to his life in the hope of his rejoining her elsewhere,[14] is assured by his preceptor that even by putting an end to his life he could not be reunited to his wife as their respective paths and destinies were different according to their individual कर्मसंचय so that after death they may well move on in opposite directions, never to meet for a long time or not at all.[15]

Death, says the poet, is liberation of the embodied soul from an imperfect or comatose condition (विकृति) to his normal healthy state (प्रकृति). What we call life on this planet is an unnatural, unhealthy and purblind condition (विकृति) of the flesh-imprisoned soul.[16] The earthly existence is the result of कर्मबन्ध (the tie forged by past actions) and वासनाबन्ध (the bondage of desires) and the embodied soul is, as a rule, depressed and miserable. The poet Shelley has given expression to the unhappy condition

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14. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 72 :
प्रमदामनु संस्थितः शुचा नृपतिः सन्निति वाच्यदर्शनात् ।
न चकार शरीरमग्निसात्सह देव्या न तु जीविताशया ॥

15. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 85 :
रुदता कुत एव सा पुनर्भवता नानृमृतापि लभ्यते ।
परलोकजुषां स्वकर्मभिर्गतयो भिन्नपथा हि देहिनाम् ॥

16. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 87 :
मरणं प्रकृतिः शरीरिणां विकृतिर्जीवितमुच्यते बुधैः ।
क्षणमप्यवतिष्ठते श्वसन्यदि जन्तुर्ननु लाभवानसौ ॥

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of man under the best of circumstances :

"We look before and after
And pine for what is not ;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught ;
And our sweetest songs are those
That speak of saddest thought."

He is released from this undesirable state by what is popularly called "death".

Great minds in spite of marked difference of time, space, environments and religious beliefs always think the same thoughts and give expression to the "eternal verities" of human existence. Kālidāsa's view on life and death finds an unexpected confirmation and echo from the above-mentioned inspired English poet. Speaking of the death of a dear friend, Shelley says :

"Peace ! Peace !! he is not dead
He does not sleep
He has awakened from the dream of life
'Tis we who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife."[17]
(Shelley : "Adonais")

So also the advice of Kālidāsa to worldly-minded persons in this respect is invaluable. Why mourn for the loss of external objects like money or even near relations, when your body itself may be taken away from you at a moment's notice?[18]

The poet goes so far as to remark that the loss of these external objects to which men get attached by long association is a distinct blessing in disguise as it releases the mind from the thraldom of attachment to these evanescent objects

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17. Compare "मरणं प्रकृतिः शरीरिणां..." *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 87.

18. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 89 :
स्वशरीरशरीरिणावपि श्रुतसंयोगविपर्ययौ यदा ।
विरहः किमिवानुतापयेद्वद बाह्यैर्विषयैरवंपश्चितम् ॥

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of this world and makes him better fitted for the far happier existence hereafter.[19]

He also enjoins on a bereaved person not to succumb to uncontrolled grief for his deceased friend because incessant tears shed for the departed burn the latter's astral body (लिङ्गशरीर).[20] This world therefore is according to the poet a brief halting place or disciplinary school of the sojourning soul on his way to far higher and happier worlds.

The doctrine of Karman and reincarnation of souls runs like a golden thread throughout the Indian esoteric philosophy.

Śākuntala V. 2 embodies another precious maxim of Hindu philosophy. In his continuous passage from one incarnation to another the soul is steadily gathering knowledge and useful impressions and experiences which are safely stored up in what is called the "sub-conscious mind". Normally this vast and valuable storehouse is a sealed book to average mortals except only a few blessed ones who by virtue of *yoga* or *tapasyā*, win the privilege of looking at will into this precious treasure of varied past experiences, impressions, and associations, gathered during hundreds of past incarnations. When in an introspective mood a *yogin* chews the cud as it were of his bygone experiences and lives over again his past associations with his beloved ones, there is no beatitude which can equal that unique enjoyment. To an ordinary mortal however a fleeting glimpse into this wonderful treasure-house is on rare occasions vouchsafed by kindly Providence under exceptional circumstances described in this verse.[21]

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19. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 88 :
अवगच्छति मूढचेतनः प्रियनाशं हृदि शल्यमर्पितम् ।
स्थिरधीस्तु तदेव मन्यते कुशलद्वारतया समुद्धृतम् ॥

20. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 86 :
स्वजनाश्रु किलातिसंततं दहति प्रेतमिति प्रचक्षते ।

21. *Śākuntala* V. 2 :
रम्याणि वीक्ष्य मधुरांश्च निशम्य शब्दान्पर्युत्सुकीभवति यत्सुखितोऽपि जन्तुः ।
तच्चेतसा स्मरति नूनमबोधपूर्वं भावस्थिराणि जननान्तरसौहृदानि ॥.

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By a miraculous coincidence this verse happens to be beautifully and almost literally translated by Charles Dickens in his famous novel "Oliver Twist" (p. 166, Gresham edition). The author remarks: "Thus a strain of gentle music or the rippling of water in a silent place, or the odour of a flower or even the mention of a familiar word, will sometimes call up sudden dim remembrances of scenes, that never were in this life—which vanish like a breath—which some brief memory of a happier existence, long gone by, would seem to have awakened, and which no voluntary exertion of mind can ever recall." Kālidāsa and Dickens never heard of each other, but such is the mysterious masonic tie between inspired great minds that both of them have given expression to this eternal truth in almost identical words.[22] The poet Browning has also clearly hinted at the same idea in his "Bishop Blougram's Apology"; he says:

"Just when we are safest, there is a sunset touch,
A fancy from a flower bell, some one's death,
A chorus-ending from Euripides,
And there is enough for fifty hopes and fears
As old and new at once as nature's self
To rap and knock and enter into one's soul."

Another remarkable instance of ideological coincidence occurs in Charles Dickens's novel "Martin Chuzzlewit" at p. 93 (Gresham's edn.). Pecksniff, a well-known character of the novel, who likes to pose as a philosopher, makes the following observations: "What are we but coaches? Our passions are the horses—and rampant animals too! and

22. Also see "Spine-killers" selected by Elizabeth Lee from "Bernice" by Edgar Allan Poe. "But it is mere idleness to say that I had not lived before, that the soul had no previous existence. You deny it? Let us not argue the matter. Convinced myself I seek not to convince. There is however a remembrance of aerial forms, of spiritual and meaning eyes of sounds musical yet sad; a remembrance which will not be excluded, a memory like a shadow, vague, variable, indefinite, unsteady; like a shadow too in the impossibility of my getting rid of it while the sunlight of my reason shall still exist."

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virtue is the drag. We start from 'Mother's Arms' and run to 'Dust Shovel'."

This is a very near approach and imitation, though crude and incomplete, of *Kaṭhopaniṣad* I. 3. 3-4 which compares the human soul to the owner of a chariot (coach), which again is compared to the human body. 'Intellect' is the driver of this chariot, 'mind' the controlling rein or bridle. The organs of the body are the horses who are perpectually attracted by, and run after, the object of the senses (विषय्s).[23]

Although such coincidences are rare they may be taken as proof enough of the universality of the fully developed human souls which transcend all limitations of nationality, habitat and religious creeds.

The expression "भावस्थिराणि जननान्तरसौहृदानि" is worth a few remarks. Rāma had no clear recollection of his previous birth; he however experienced a mysterious thrill, longing and sadness when he visited the hermitage familiar to him in his previous incarnation of Vāmana.[24] Associations in this life are of two kinds: (1) associations of convenience, and (2) those which are brought about by mysterious soul affinities or strong spiritual ties. The latter are comparatively of rare occurrence. Most of what are called family ties, e.g., husband and wife, father and children, can as a rule be classed as contacts of convenience which never sink deep into the soul and leave a permanent impress thereon. The soul affinities, though rare, penetrate into the inner core of the subconscious mind, and often rise to the surface under conditions indicated in Kālidāsa's verse referred to above. You get hurried fleeting glimpses of the

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23. *Kaṭhopaniṣad* I. 3.3-4.:
आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव च ।
बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ॥
इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुर्विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान् ।
आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः ॥

24. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 22 :
वामनाश्रमपदं ततः परं पावनं श्रुतमृषेरुपेयिवान् ।
उन्मनाः प्रथमजन्मचेष्टितान्यस्मरन्नपि बभूव राघवः ॥

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beloved ones, intimately linked with you in your past lives, but this ineffably sweet and ravishing experience vanishes like a breath leaving you disconsolate and with a feeling of inexplicable loss and longing.

Similarly *Śākuntala* V. 6 embodies another important truth. Every person is striving after some deeply cherished goal, in the achievement of which he fancies his entire happiness is centred. So long as the much-desired objective is far from attainment, it possesses a charm all its own. But as soon as the illusive object comes within his firm grasp and he gets accustomed to it for some time, off vanishes its glamour and fascination and the poor deluded mortal finds that he has been panting after a mirage which is incapable of giving him permanent and complete satisfaction. Moreover the trouble of preserving what he has acquired after so much toil and turmoil often weighs down so heavily on him as to cause positive discomfort and complete disillusionment.[25] The उपमा (illustration) given in the last line of the verse is very happy and appropriate. A royal umbrella (छत्र), the chief insignia of kingship, is a very heavy article indeed! Suppose a man anxious to attain to royal dignity even for a short time is made to hold this heavy object over his head by his own hand, his vanity may be satisfied for a few moments but the hand which holds the handle of the gaudy bauble would soon tell its own pitiful tale. Such, says the poet, are as a rule the pleasures and vanities of life which man is perpetually running after and striving for.

The human life is full of lost opportunities which often slip through our fingers never to return again. Duṣyanta moralizes over such fleeting chances thrown in a man's way by a tantalizing fate.[26] Śakuntalā, the long-awaited fruition of his cherished desire of a life-time, came to him of her

25. *Śākuntala* V. 6 :
औत्सुक्यमात्रमवसाययति प्रतिष्ठा क्लिश्नाति लब्धपरिपालनवृत्तिरेनम् ।
नातिश्रमापनयनाय यथा श्रमाय राज्यं स्वहस्तधृतदण्डमिवातपत्रम् ॥

26. *Śākuntala* VI. 10 :
स्वप्नो नु माया नु मतिभ्रमो नु क्लिष्टं नु तावत्फलमेव पुण्यम् ।
असंनिवृत्त्यै तदतीतमेते मनोरथा नाम तटप्रपाताः ॥

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own accord and he like an inebriated fool repulsed and cast her off. The incident appears to him like a fantastic dream! a strange illusion! Like to a very precious object momentarily appearing on the surface of a rapidly moving cascade and permanently disappearing into the depth of its abysmal cavern, because it is not promptly snatched away in time, the one hope of his life finally vanished never to return. Human life is full of such lost precious opportunities.

Hence it is said:

> Of all the words of tongue and pen
> The saddest are these: "it might have been".

Rise and fall, growth and decay, prosperity and adversity, alternate one another, as appears to be the inexorable law of nature. Even the glorious Sun and the Moon experience their turn of decline and fall.

The Brahmin boy in Kaṇva's hermitage, in his description of the breaking dawn, illustrates this truth in a striking manner. It appears to have been the night of the full moon. The nocturnal orb of translucent light and beauty is slowly disappearing on the western horizon which is pale and lustreless, while the mighty Lord of the Day is making his glorious debut in the east. Thus one mighty power on earth goes down into oblivion after its allotted time of glory and makes room for another to take its place.[27]

The second illustration of this maxim given by the poet is equally impressive. As among the pots of the water-wheel some are rising up full of water while others, being gradually emptied, go down to meet the water level to be

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Śākuntala VII. 13 : पूर्वावधीरितं श्रेयो दुःखं हि परिवर्तते ।

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries." Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*, Act IV, Sc. III.

27. *Śākuntala* IV. 1 :

यान्येकतोऽस्तशिखरं पतिरोषधीनामाविष्कृतोऽरुणपुरःसर एकतोऽर्कः ।
तेजोद्वयस्य युगपद्व्यसनोदयाभ्यां लोको नियम्यत इवात्मदशान्तरेषु ॥

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again filled up in their turn, so, says the poet, some rise in the world great and prosperous while others having enjoyed their good days come down and sink into poverty and obscurity to rise again when the wheel of fortune turns in their favour.[28]

The changing condition of the river according to the time of the year is also pressed into service to inculcate the same truth. The river which in hot season gets dried up, with only ditch water here and there, swells up into a torrential and devastating current during the rainy season.[29]

In *Kumārasambhava* Canto VIII the same sentiment is placed in the mouth of Śaṅkara.[30]

One may not always agree with the poet in his general assumption that as regards difficult and doubtful questions, the natural inclination or instinct of a good man unerringly points to a right decision. In the first place the man concerned must be good enough to make his natural instinct fool-proof, and even so the instinct may be tampered with or rendered misleading by his own ardent desires and predilections.[31]

There are some conventional methods of releasing oneself from the bondage of earthly desires and attaining to the inestimable and imperishable beatitude spoken of by the Vedāntins. One of these is mentioned in Canto VIII of *Raghuvaṁśa* in connection with Raghu, the father of Aja, who after giving up his throne in favour of his son took to a life of severe religious discipline and contemplation.

The first step towards the attainment of this much-desired and blissful state of complete emancipation, is to wean himself altogether from the attachment of the objects

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28. *Meghadūta* II. 46 : नीचैर्गच्छत्युपरि च दशा चक्रनेमिक्रमेण ।

29. *Kumārasambhava* IV. 44 : रविपीतजला तपात्यये पुनरोघेन हि युज्यते नदी ।

30. „ VIII. 43 : तेजसो महत ईदृशी गति ।

31. *Śākuntala* I. 19 :

असंशयं क्षत्रपरिग्रहक्षमा यदार्यमस्यामभिलाषि मे मनः ।
सतां हि संदेहपदेषु वस्तुषु प्रमाणमन्तःकरणप्रवृत्तयः ॥

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of the senses.[32] Raghu lost all appetite for pleasures not only of this world but also those attainable in heaven. He took to forest life and put on bark garments.[33] He took to solitude and sitting on a seat of holy grass perseveringly practised introspection and concentration of the mind.[34] He gradually obtained complete control over the five vital breaths[35] (प्राण, अपान, व्यान, उदान and समान). He sought also that supreme knowledge which burns down the vicious bondage of past actions and desires binding the helpless soul to the ever-rotating chariot-wheel of worldly existence.[36] There are two ways prescribed by the *Gītā* for cutting through the vicious circle of कर्म. The easier and more common way is that of निष्कामकर्मयोग which enjoins the regular performance of acts which fall to the lot of a person in his earthly life, casting off, however, all attachment for the results or fruits of such acts, i.e., being absolutely indifferent as to whether they produce good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant results. In this manner the वासनाशरीर ("desire-body") gets gradually wasted and worn out and ultimately कर्मबन्ध (the bondage created by past acts) is totally destroyed. The second or much more difficult method to achieve the same end, is to obtain right or true knowledge (सम्यग्ज्ञान) which when it dawns upon the soul, at a stroke burns down all dross in the shape of the accumulated results of past actions. Raghu owing to his high spiritual calibre appears to have adopted the latter or more difficult course. He gradually got the better of three Guṇas (elementary qualities or impulses underlying the cosmos) सत्त्व, रजस् and तमस्[37] and attained to a state of absolute equilibrium and

32. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 10 :
विषयेषु विनाशधर्मसु त्रिदिवस्थेष्वपि निःस्पृहोऽभवत् ।

33. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 11 : पदवीं तरुवल्कवाससां प्रयताः संयमिनां प्रपेदिरे ।

34. „ VIII. 18 : परिचेतुमुपांशु धारणां कुशपूतं प्रवयास्तु विष्टरम् ।

35. „ VIII. 19 :
अपरः प्रणिधानयोग्यया मरुतः पञ्च शरीरगोचरान् (वशमनयत्) ।

36. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 20 : इतरो दहने स्वकर्मणां ववृते ज्ञानमयेन वह्निना ।

37. „ VIII. 21 : रघुरप्यजयद्गुणत्रयं प्रकृतिस्थं समलोष्टकाञ्चनः ।

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peace. It is the constant functioning of these Guṇas on which the universe is revolving in its accustomed orbit. सत्त्व is power, रजस् passion and तमस inertia or ignorance. A person by prolonged self-discipline, rises over all these elementary spurs to action (गुणs) and attains to a rarified and spiritual atmosphere of unmentionable bliss.

Yoga is of two kinds. The lower aspect of Yoga is called Haṭhayoga which confines itself to certain practices involving rigorous discipline and regimentation of the body and its activities. Haṭhayoga invests a person practising it with certain Siddhis or superhuman and mystic powers. Even in these days of spiritual decadence of the Hindu race it is not difficult to find here and there persons possessing astounding powers such as burying themselves underground for days or even months together without the least harm or inconvenience to themselves. Haṭhayoga, however, does not enable a person to attain to Mokṣa or final release and may even become an impediment or hindrance in its way, as it generally results in Ahaṁkāra or false pride which necessarily entails spiritual degradation. Jñānayoga[38] is practised by means of ध्यान (contemplation), धारणा (strict discipline of the mind which is sternly and persistently held back from running after the objects of the senses which is its innate nature) and समाधि (getting in tune with the Infinite).

A merely passing reference is made here to these time-honoured methods of salvation as this is no place to deal with its vast and complicated details.

Hinduism, there is hardly any doubt, is the oldest religion in the world. At the same time it is the most catholic, all-comprehending and a fully tolerant religious system. A creed which does not appeal to or satisfy the mind or convince the intellect of its followers but mainly relies for its hold on them by means of irrational and dogmatic doctrines, always suffers from an inferiority complex and

38. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 22 :

न नवः प्रभुरा फलोदयात्स्थिरकर्मा विरराम कर्मणः ।
न च योगविधेर्नवेतरः स्थिरधीरा परमात्मदर्शनात् ॥

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is not tired of proclaiming to the world that it is the only religion of the genuine brand, directly imported from heaven through the good offices of its prophet, whom the God Almighty has appointed his sole plenipotentiary on earth and through whose intervention alone, man can attain to salvation. All those who do not join and espouse their particular brand of religion are *kafirs* or heathens doomed to eternal damnation!

In striking contrast to this childish and unreasoning mental attitude, it is refreshing to find a creed which professes respect for every religious system and dispassionately tries to appreciate the good points in them. It is free from all fanaticism and welcomes true knowledge from all sources. It declares in no uncertain words that all religious systems, however defective, are so many paths proceeding to the same goal in more or less time, either with greater or less ease, according to the quality or excellence of their precepts. Kālidāsa boldly declares this great gospel in no uncertain words: "All creeds although they may differ or (appear to differ) in their essential doctrines, whose object is to attain perfection, lead only to Thee as the numerous tributaries of the Ganges (although initially having different sources) ultimately pour themselves (join) into the ocean!"[39]

This grand truth is also enunciated by the *Gītā*.[40] Hindu missionaries and saints therefore are never afraid of

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39. *Raghuvaṁśa* X. 26 :
बहुव्याप्यागमैर्भिन्नाः पन्थानः सिद्धिहेतवः ।
त्वय्येव निपतन्त्योघा जाह्नवीया इवार्णवे ॥

40. *Bhagavadgītā* IX. 23 :
येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥
Bhagavadgītā XVIII. 45 :
स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः
Bhagavadgītā IV. 11 :
ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

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arguments or criticism but are always willing to satisfy and solve all honest doubts and difficulties—they abhor the monstrous attitude which is not ashamed to throw out an open challenge "Utter a single word against my religion and I will murder you"—nor do they brand an honestly doubting person as a heretic fated to eternally burn in the fires of hell.

If adherents of all religious systems were to adopt such sane and healthy attitude, much of the senseless hatred and hostility in the world due to difference in religious beliefs would immediately disappear and the world would be a much better place to live in.

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Chapter XVI

GOLDEN WORDS OF WISDOM

After dealing with the religious and metaphysical philosophy of Kālidāsa which it must be said is a faithful echo of the prevailing concepts and trends of thought of his time, it becomes necessary to take stock of the poet's deep and intimate knowledge of human nature, his vast and varied worldly experience which finds expression in characteristically striking maxims mostly in the shape of अर्थान्तरन्यास (general observations arising out of special incidents or contexts). This figure of speech is strewn broadcast throughout his literary masterpieces. From this copious and rich record of his wide experience of human nature and of the world in its varied aspects, it may be safely inferred that the poet must have lived a chequered and eventful life. One may not be surprised if he is ultimately proved to have been the same person as the Mātṛgupta of Kashmir of the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* fame. There is no better way of cataloguing his invaluable words of wisdom than to deal seriatim with his poetical works one by one. It is obviously not possible to have continuity and connection of ideas because the references relate to manifold and varied subjects.

Very often in the world of commerce as well as in that of literature, tinsel is often made to pass as gold. As the reliable test of gold is that it should be melted in the furnace so that the dross or alloy, if any, is made manifest and becomes capable of being separated therefrom,[1] similarly literary efforts should be subjected to the ordeal of being scrutinized by impartial and learned scholars. The

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1. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 10 :
हेम्नः संलक्ष्यते ह्यग्नौ विशुद्धिः श्यामिकापि वा ।

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chief grievance of rising literary lights is that their path to due appraisement and recognition is always made difficult by the existence of powerful literary cliques which are pledged to support their own favourites and partisans and look askance against any outsider who attempts to encroach on their well-guarded preserves.[2]

Misguided and misapplied efforts are always doomed to failure. Much discretion and skill is required in choosing a fit and proper subject before energy, endeavour and money are expended on it. If an unworthy pupil is chosen by the teacher, he is bound to prove a colossal failure, even at the cost of untold exertion and expense.[3]

The ultimate test of the success or ability of a king or government is the happiness and prosperity of the subjects.[4] If trade and commerce are languishing, there is gloom, despondency, and a sense of frustration and insecurity everywhere, nepotism and corruption is the order of the day, no amount of high-sounding words and slogans can save a government from disgrace and condemnation. The old ideal of kingship described in Kālidāsa's writings is so lofty and supremely unselfish that in the present times it may appear a mere figment of the imagination. Even in comparatively recent times, however, kings like Aśoka, Candragupta, Harṣa and Śivachatrapati have proved that India was fully capable of producing supposed legendary kings like Raghu, Rāma and Atithi.

The statement given below[5] appears to convey a grand idea but it must be practised with great restraint and circumspection. Unscrupulous opportunists when they are

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2. *Subhāṣita-Ratna-Bhāṇḍāgāra :*
वोद्धारो मत्सरग्रस्ताः प्रभवः स्मयदूषिताः ।

3. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 29 : क्रिया हि वस्तूपहिता प्रसीदति ।
Mālavikāgnimitra I. 6 :
पात्रविशेषे न्यस्तं गुणान्तरं व्रजति शिल्पमाधातुः ।
जलमिव समुद्रशुक्तौ मुक्ताफलतां पयोदस्य ॥

4. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 12 : राजा प्रकृतिरञ्जनात् ।

5. „ IV. 64 : प्रणिपातप्रतीकारः संरम्भो हि महात्मनाम

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completely beaten have no shame whatever, to lick the dust off the feet of their conqueror. If they are let off with impunity, they are like wounded serpents who await a fitting opportunity to hit back with interest and satisfy their rancorous hatred. Historical incidents like that of Prithviraj Chavan who met his death at the hands of his treacherous and ungrateful adversary can be cited without number and are grave warnings against indiscriminately putting this principle in practice with complete disregard to the nature and antecedents of the opponent who may make a feint of surrender and submission for the time being to await a suitable opportunity for remorseless vengeance. Strike at a serpent only to kill it.

A person who has grown poor by using his fortune for the relief of the helpless and the indigent is more to be respected than the bloated rich who is deaf to the cry of distress.[6]

The statement quoted below[7], though it may savour of fatalism, is found to be a sound maxim in actual experience. Mere medical aid, however efficient and sincere, in many cases comes to nought due to the supervention of unexpected complications. The Hindu believes that every created thing has got an allotted period of life and when it comes to an end no amount of human effort can prolong it even for a second. The poet also has expressed his complete belief in divine dispensation and remarks that by God's Will poison can save life, while ambrosia may kill a person. A chance contact with a garland of divine flowers causes the death of Indumatī. Hence the observation appears very appropriate.[8]

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6. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 16 :
पर्यायपीतस्य सुरैर्हिमांशोः कलाक्षयः श्लाघ्यतरो हि वृद्धेः ।
Meghadūta I. 53 : आपन्नार्तिप्रशमनफलाः संपदो ह्युत्तमानाम् ।
Raghuvaṁśa IV. 86 : आदानं हि विसर्गाय सतां वारिमुचामिव ।

7. „ VIII. 40 : प्रतिकारविधानमायुषः सति शेषे हि फलाय कल्पते ।

8. „ VIII. 46 : विषमप्यमृतं क्वचिद्भवेदमृतं वा विषमीश्वरेच्छया ।

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The statement quoted below[9] is an obvious proposition, but the poet makes use of this maxim there to save himself from a somewhat embarrassing position. When the epic was composed, the descendants of many princes mentioned in that canto may have been powerful ruling potentates of the vast Indian continent. The poet who was a clever strategist did not desire to wound the feelings of any of them. So he says, "Yes, it is true that Indumatī bypassed many eligible princes, but what then? There is no explanation for personal likes or dislikes; tastes differ". It is in no way therefore a disparagement to the other princes that Aja was preferred to them. Another explanation which the poet gives to assuage the wounded self-love of the rejected princes is that the affinities created in past births prevail in determining the choice of the bride-groom or the bride.[10]

Oh! the extreme fickleness and evanescent nature of human existence! A person may be active and alive to-day and vanish in thin air tomorrow.[11] Even before the perspiration gathered on the face of Indumatī by the exertions due to amorous dalliance has time enough to dry up, lo! she herself has departed from the world for good. The floral decorations, mourns Rati in *Kumārasambhava*, which Madana had fashioned on her body were still intact and fresh, but where was the skilful and loving artist who designed them?

Learning and erudition are all right in their own way. It is however a mistake to suppose that these are an absolute guarantee against a person suddenly going astray or flying off at a tangent by the mere force of a sudden perverse

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9. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 30 : भिन्नरुचिर्हि लोकः ।

10. „ VII. 15 : मनो हि जन्मान्तरसंगतिज्ञम् ।

11. „ VIII. 51 : धिगिमां देहभृतामसारताम् ।

Kumārasambhava IV. 18 :

रचितं रतिपण्डित ! त्वया स्वयमङ्गेषु ममेदमार्तवम् ।
ध्रियते कुसुमप्रसाधनं तव तच्चारु वपुर्न दृश्यते ॥

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impulse.[12] Daśaratha was well-versed in all Śāstras and knew well that to a king the life of an elephant was sacrosanct. But such is the inherent weakness of human nature and the force of destiny that he must aim an arrow at a supposed elephant and thus inadvertently kill an innocent ascetic boy. The *Bhagavadgītā* also gives expression to the same sentiment.[13]

Given below is an eternal truth expressed with the aid of a remarkably appropriate, forceful and realistic simile.[14] The earth unless it is thoroughly burnt out by fire cannot produce a plentiful harvest. The well-merited curse of the bereaved ascetic and the suffering it entailed, were necessary to qualify Daśaratha for being the parent of the great and illustrious Rāma whose life mission was to liberate the Gods from the galling thraldom of the wicked Rāvaṇa. Unless a person undergoes the fiery ordeal of privation and arduous labour, he cannot rise to eminence in the world.

Rāma when he was still a mere boy was requisitioned by Viśvāmitra for punishing the fierce demons who ravaged the sacrificial rites of the Brahmins. The poet says that in the case of a few fortunate elects of this world, age is of no consequence.[15] Did not Alexander the Great subjugate almost the whole of the then known world before he attained his twentythird year ? The poet appears to think that it is the class and quality which prevails and not mere age. A young boy of the royal lineage therefore can easily

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12. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 74 : अपथे पदमर्पयन्ति हि श्रुतवन्तोऽपि रजोनिमीलिताः ।

13. *Bhagavadgītā* II. 60 :
यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥

14. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 80 :
कृष्यां दहन्नपि खलु क्षितिमिन्धनेद्धो बीजप्ररोहजननीं ज्वलनः करोति ।

15. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 1 : तेजसां हि न वयः समीक्ष्यते ।
Vikramorvaśīya V. 18 : न खलु वयसा जात्यैवायं स्वकार्यसहो भरः ।
Raghuvaṁśa XVIII. 45 :
नितान्तगुर्वीमपि सोऽनुभावाद्धुरं धरित्र्या बिभरांबभूव ।

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bear the heavy responsibility of ruling his kingdom because he is born to rule.

A warrior always chooses an opponent worthy of his steel and never degrades himself by entering the lists against a despicable foe. The king of birds—Garuḍa—takes pleasure in killing giant serpents and does not take any notice of small non-poisonous reptiles. Similarly Rāma did not aim his arrows against the rank and file of the demons but picked out and killed their powerful leaders.[16]

Does the proud and vengeful serpent bite his aggressor with the desire of tasting a few drops of blood oozing out of the incision made by his teeth? His chief object is to vindicate his self-respect and avenge the insult dealt out to him.[17] It is meant to be conveyed in the verse cited below that the chief object of Rāma in invading Rāvaṇa was not so much to recover Sītā from the latter's clutches but to vindicate his royal prestige and dignity. The maxim is unexceptionable but its use in the particular context is unfortunate.

After having given free reins to the lower passions, the mind becomes so steeped in and completely captivated by the irresistible craving for sensual pleasures that it becomes increasingly difficult to wean a libertine from his downhill course of over-indulgence and degradation.[18] It is only possible to pull up the sensualist in the initial stages of his aberration, but it becomes almost impossible to arrest a rake's headlong downfall.

This[19] is a well-directed hit against those who flee from the world and its multifarious temptations to pursue the path of easy and undeviating virtue as well as against

16. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 27 :
किं महोरगविसर्पिविक्रमो राजिलेषु गरुडः प्रवर्तते ।
17. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 41:
अमर्षणः शोणितकाङ्क्षया किं पदा स्पृशन्तं दशति द्विजिह्वः ।
18. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 49 :
स्वादुभिस्तु विषयैर्हृतस्ततो दुःखमिन्द्रियगणो निवार्यते ।
19. *Kumārasambhava* I. 59 :
विकारहेतौ सति विक्रियन्ते येषां न चेतांसि त एव धीराः ।

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those indiscreet rulers who vainly try to improve the morals of the people for the time being consigned to their care by subjecting them to a series of senseless and irksome inhibitions. The moral fibre of a person gets strengthened by boldly facing temptations and getting the better of them by force of his will power. The poet means to convey that this kind of carefully guarded and nurtured virtue is cheap and of the hot-house quality and crumbles down at the first blast of temptation. The person who seeks jungle solitude to avoid temptations is deeply conscious of his inherent weakness. He alone is a man of sterling worth and fortitude who boldly faces temptations and remains unaffected by them. Thus Śaṅkara fully confident in his own strength readily allows the beautiful Pārvatī to attend upon him. Viśvāmitra and other ascetics who sought the jungle shades and solitudes to escape temptations, ultimately fell a prey to the enticements of their unruly desires. A man who is abstinent or moderate in a place where drinks are easily available is far more virtuous than the one who is made to abstain from them under compulsion but drinks himself silly when he can do so with impunity and without hindrance.

This[20] is a very wholesome advice which deserves to be taken to heart by the apostles of unalloyed *Ahiṁsā* and of perpetual appeasement of the unappeasables. A wicked man knows only the language of fear; a declared policy of persistent non-violence, appeasement, surrender and defeatism is suicidally fatal when dealing with unscrupulous, fanatical and aggressively greedy enemies.

Very often both private persons and ruling bodies find themselves in this difficult predicament. They foster an evil for certain purposes of their own and when it grows beyond their control in course of time, they are prevented by misguided sentiment and false prestige in laying the axe to the root of that evil.[21]

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20. *Kumārasambhava* II. 40 : शाम्येत्प्रत्यपकारेण नोपकारेण दुर्जनः ।

21. „ II. 55 : विषवृक्षोऽपि संवर्ध्य स्वयं छेत्तुमसांप्रतम् ।

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This cynical observation[22] may have been very probably the result of the personal experience of the poet himself. If Kālidāsa turns out to have been identical with Mātṛgupta, sometime king of Kashmir mentioned in *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, the buffets of fortune which he is said to have suffered at the court of king Harṣa Vikramāditya of Ujjain before he was raised to the throne of Kashmir must have wrung from his despondent heart some such expression as this one. This is the general experience of servants and toadies who cluster round about rich men. As a rule opportunism is the hall-mark of the rich capitalists and over-lords.

The flowers which have very charming colours are often devoid of smell. This is a rule of almost universal application. Most of the disappointments of human life are caused by our search after absolute perfection in this imperfect world.[23] No human being or human endeavour can be entirely free from defects or shortcomings.[24] Among a multitude of excellent qualities, however, a minor fault may be regarded as negligible.[25] To remember the useful adage embodied in this verse is likely to prove a great help for the preservation of peace and tranquillity by blunting the edge of disappointments and disillusionments.

When a person has achieved perfect control and equilibrium of the mind by hard and prolonged discipline, obstacles and set-backs leave him unmoved.[26] The sudden and untimely manifestation of the inebriating glories of the vernal season proved too much for the other ascetics on that particular tract of the Himalayas where God Śaṅkara was practising penance and they could not con-

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22. *Kumārasambhava* III. 1 : प्रयोजनापेक्षितया प्रभूणां प्रायश्चलं गौरवमाश्रितेषु ।
23. „ III. 28 :
प्रायेण सामग्र्यविधौ गुणानां पराङ्मुखी विश्वसृजः प्रवृत्तिः ।
24. *Bhagavadgītā* XVIII. 48 : सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ।
25. *Kumārasambhava* I. 3 :
एको हि दोषो गुणसंनिपाते निमज्जतीन्दोः किरणेष्विवाङ्कः ।
26. *Kumārasambhava* III. 40 :
आत्मेश्वराणां न हि जातु विघ्नाः समाधिभेदप्रभवो भवन्ति ।

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centrate their minds on the Infinite, but Śiva, the king of the yogins, remained entirely calm and unperturbed. A cyclone may uproot trees, but cannot move a mountain![27]

Is this true as a general rule? It may be that what is called love for a woman may often depend on mere sex appeal and sex urge and as these are liable to wear away in course of time a man's attachment for a woman may weaken or even vanish in some measure, while the bond of mutual sympathy, like tastes and loved memories of the past, which sometimes bind together two persons of the same sex, may continue unshaken and firm.[28]

It is said that a cat has nine lives. Does woman belong more or less to the same category? Rati the wife of the God of Love says, "Lo! That body of thine, my beloved!, which had become the model and ideal of pleasure-seekers, I see reduced to mere ashes. How is it that I am not stricken dead at the appalling sight? Oh! we women are indeed hard-hearted."[29]

A woman is said to possess greater power of endurance than mere man although the latter is endowed by nature with more brawn and muscle. This may be an illustration of the well-known law of Compensation.

The ups and downs of life are in their essence of an evanescent nature. The dry, dirty and arid basin of a great river in the hot season, becomes a magnificent, all-sweeping, giddy torrent during the rains. Nothing is stable in this world.[30] Rati is therefore advised not to commit the rash indiscretion of destroying herself but to await a favourable turn of the wheel of fortune.

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27. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 90 :
द्रुमसानुमतां किमन्तरं यदि वायौ द्वितयेऽपि ते चलाः ।

28. *Kumārasambhava* IV. 28 :
दयितास्वनवस्थितं नृणां न खलु प्रेम चलं सुहृज्जने ।

29. *Kumārasambhava* IV. 5 : कठिनाः खलु स्त्रियः ।

30. „ IV. 44 : रविपीतजला तपात्यये पुनरोघेन हि युज्यते नदी
Meghadūta II. 46 : नीचैर्गच्छत्युपरि च दशा चक्रनेमिक्रमेण ।

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Strong, irresistible will power and persistent, unremitting efforts in the pursuit of the desired goal can achieve anything.[31] Who says that Indians are fatalists? The previous actions of a person may have created strong adverse currents and tendencies which may make the way to notable achievements arduous and difficult but never impossible for a dynamic and determined soul.

A jewel must be sought for and striven after; it rarely offers itself on a golden platter.[32] It is the mediocre persons who run after lucrative posts and places of power and profit, but a really competent, selfless man must be searched for and secured with difficulty. Ordinary girls cannot help angling for husbands but a स्त्रीरत्न can afford to wait, and pick and choose among a crowd of eager suitors.

Quoted below[33] is the usual apology and explanation put forward for the crazy eccentricities and absurd antics of the socalled Sādhus (spiritual masters), Mahatmas (supermen) and naked Fakirs. It is said that people of ordinary intelligence wanting in deep spiritual insight cannot fathom the mystic nature and beneficent purpose of the apparently absurd and senseless acts of these worthies, and therefore adversely criticize, in their ignorance, their deep-laid plans for human welfare. If these impostors cannot support their stunts and fads by intelligible arguments, they are always at liberty to call to aid their "inner voice" or "second sight". If a person is crazy, undisciplined and whimsical, he may effectually cover his faults by assuming the mantle of a Mahatma.

Mālavikāgnimitra I. 16 gives a model definition of an ideal teacher.[34] Deep and wide scholarship, and a special

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31. *Kumārasambhava* V. 5 :
क ईप्सितार्थस्थिरनिश्चयं मनः पयश्च निम्नाभिमुखं प्रतीपयेत् ।
32. *Kumārasambhava* V. 45 : न रत्नमन्विष्यति मृग्यते हि तत् ।
33. „ V. 75 :
अलोकसामान्यमचिन्त्यहेतुकं द्विषन्ति मन्दाश्चरितं महात्मनाम् ।
34. *Mālavikāgnimitra* I. 16 :
श्लिष्टा क्रिया कस्यचिदात्मसंस्था संक्रान्तिरन्यस्य विशेषयुक्ता ।
यस्योभयं साधु स शिक्षकाणां धुरि प्रतिष्ठापयितव्य एव ॥

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aptitude and skill for imparting knowledge' are difficult to meet with in one person. This verse is a fine specimen of the shrewdness and erudition of the Parivrājikā in *Mālavikāgnimitra*.

Śaṅkara in the guise of a Brahmin boy (वटु) with a view to put to test Pārvatī's love and loyalty to himself, tries to dissuade her from what he calls her suicidal indiscretion in seeking to wed a दिगम्बर (a naked person). He says: "Your prospective husband applies ashes of dead bodies to his limbs, allows hideous serpents to roll over and wind themselves about his body, associates with ghosts and ghouls in cemeteries and burning grounds, which are his favourite haunts, rides an absurd old bull, covers himself with the skins of newly killed elephants dripping with blood, even his parentage is unknown and the unusual possession of the third eye makes him grotesquely ugly. Is he a fitting consort for a supremely beautiful, gifted and high-born girl like you? Please consider this well before you take such a disastrous step." Pārvatī, nettled by these uncomplimentary hits against her chosen husband, retorts that the Lord of the Universe, the supreme dispenser of all good to his creatures, is far above their common aspirations and desires. Various devices are resorted to by humans in order to ward off evil and attract well-being and good fortune.[35] In *Vikramorvaśīya* the poet describes the pious occupations, at eventide, of the matrons of good families.[36] They offer flowers to the family deities at the threshold of their houses and also place auspicious lights on the door-steps. All creeds and communities have their auspicious rituals and devices of this nature. Pārvatī says that the motive behind all these is to prevent evil and attract good, but what has the overlord of the universe to whom good and evil are mere

35. *Kumārasambhava* V. 76 :
विपत्प्रतीकारपरेण मङ्गलं निषेव्यते भूतिसमुत्सुकेन वा।

36. *Vikramorvaśīya* III. 2 :
आचारप्रयतः सपुष्पबलिषु स्थानेषु चार्चिष्मतीः
सन्ध्यामङ्गलदीपिका विभजते शुद्धान्तवृद्धो जनः।

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meaningless words to do with such wishful and futile stunts ?

Scandal-mongering always involves two culprits. One who wickedly disseminates evil and false reports and the other who lends him a willing and appreciative ear. If the maligner does not find willing listeners, evil talk would be nipped in the bud. Pārvatī therefore closes her ears in disgust and essays to depart before the foul-tongued वटु pours out further abuse about the universally revered God (Śaṅkara).[37]

Success after prolonged and arduous exertions has the supreme quality of effacing all fatigue and mental strain and freshening up and revitalizing the exhausted worker. The conquest of Śiva made Pārvatī a youthful and blushing damsel again, notwithstanding her prolonged and super-human austerities.[38]

The aphoristic expression quoted below[39] has passed into a well-known adage. Without the co-operation of a healthy and energetic body nobody can achieve much in any sphere of activity. It is stated that Napoleon lost the battle of Waterloo owing to a severe attack of gastritis in a critical moment owing to his having gobbled down his food in a hurry.

It is said that man created his God or gods very much after his own model. Even the most cultured and erudite person cannot divest himself of the innate love for flattery and laudation.[40] A king once made boast that he disliked and discountenanced flattery of all kinds. Even he was made to swallow the following laudatory remark by a clever courtier that "His Majesty loathes flattery like poison". Man-fashioned gods therefore appear to be inordinately

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37. *Kumārasambhava* V. 83 :
न केवलं यो महतोऽपभाषते शृणोति तस्मादपि यः स पापभाक् ।

38. *Kumārasambhava* V. 86 : क्लेशः फलेन हि पुनर्नवतां विधत्ते ।

39. „ V. 33 : शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम् ।

40. „ X. 9 : स्तोत्रं कस्य न तुष्टये ।

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fond of flattery.[41] These laudations are cast more or less in the same mould and are often tiresome.

It is almost a universal experience that a person to be put on his mettle must be subjected to sufficient provocation. Most of the people who have risen in the world, must have at some time in their life received a rude shock to their self-respect so that they were goaded to put forth every ounce of their energy and endeavour to answer the challenge given to their *amour-propre*. Mātali, Indra's charioteer, finds Duṣyanta in a comatose and enervated condition and with the object of restoring him to his inborn fiery spirit, he whisks away his dear friend (Vidūṣaka) before his eyes and severely manhandles him, so that his helpless wailings may arouse the king from his temporary stupor and depression.[42]

The more erudite and deeply read a person, the more diffident he grows about his competence.[43] Sir Francis Newton, one of the greatest physicists and naturalists of the world, once remarked that he was like a child who, roaming on a boundless seashore, perchance comes across a few shells and coloured pebbles of which, in his pusillanimity, he thinks a lot. Bhartṛhari in a well-known verse expresses the same sentiment. "When I happened to know a few rudiments of cheap knowledge, I became puffed up with pride as a young elephant, but in course of time when I came into contact with the truly learned my infatuation and vanity vanished into thin air."[44]

41. *Raghuvaṁśa* X for a fulsome praise of Viṣṇu, *Kumārasambhava* IV for that of Brahmā as well as *Kumārasambhava* for VI praise of Śiva.

42. *Śākuntala* VI. 31 :
ज्वलति चलितेन्धनोऽग्निर्विप्रकृतः पन्नगः फणां कुरुते ।
प्रायः स्वं महिमानं क्षोभात्प्रतिपद्यते हि जनः ॥

43. *Śākuntala* I. 2 : बलवदपि शिक्षितानामात्मन्यप्रत्ययं चेतः ।

44. *Nītiśataka*
यदा किंचिज्ज्ञोऽहं द्विप इव मदान्धः समभवं
तदा सर्वज्ञोऽस्मीत्यभवदवलिप्तं मम मनः ।
यदा किंचित्किंचिद्बुधजनसकाशादवगतं
तदा मूर्खोऽस्मीति ज्वर इव मदो मे व्यपगतः ॥

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This verse[45] lays down the true limits of Ahiṁsā. Lethal weapons are a necessity of life and their use will remain indispensable as long as this world is full of wicked, aggressive and greedy persons. Weapons are required and intended for the protection of the weak and the innocent from the tyranny and oppression of the strong and the evil-minded. To renounce the use of weapons altogether and leave the world at the sweet mercy of the tyrant and aggressor is a crime and cowardice. Ahiṁsā only means desisting from using arms and weapons against inoffensive and weak persons. Ahiṁsā as preached by Mahatma Gandhi therefore does not fit in with the scheme of the present world and will entail incalculable harm.

There is no nook or corner in this vast world where Destiny does not find scope to weave its net. Duṣyanta's right arm keeps on throbbing, which means that he is very near the achievement of his long-cherished desire. He wonders how this could happen in an out-of-the-way and peaceful hermitage which he was then visiting, a solitary back-water far away from the ocean of busy life. Being aware, however, of the omnipotence of Fate he says, "Oh, well, there is no place where the all-powerful Fate cannot work its will." In the hermitage he comes across the jewel-woman Śakuntalā who changed the whole current of his life.[46]

This remark[47] applies only to faultlessly and strikingly beautiful persons. They adorn everything which they wear and nothing comes amiss to them. The charm of a lotus is enhanced even by the moss which gathers around and clings to it. The moon is the more fascinating because of the black spot on his body. Such is the alchemy of genuine faultless beauty that it invests even ugliness associated with it with a certain indefinable charm.

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45. *Śākuntala* I. 10 : आर्तत्राणाय वः शस्त्रं न प्रहर्तुमनागसि ।

46. *Śākuntala* I. 14 : अथवा भवितव्यानां द्वाराणि भवन्ति सर्वत्र ।
(Compare : "Death had a thousand doors.")

47. *Śākuntala* I. 17 : किमिव हि मधुराणां मण्डनं नाकृतीनाम् ।

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The person in the throes of love sometimes behaves like a ridiculous fool! Even the meaningless and casual acts on the part of the loved one, are construed by him as a kind of direct sex appeal to himself. Duṣyanta says that Śakuntalā's gait is naturally and unconsciously charming, her glances are full of artistry and the milk of human kindness. The saucy reparties which she gives to her dear friends are only characteristic of her happy sportive nature and the innocent and bubbling spirit of mischief born of healthy adolescence, but "Lo!" says the love-afflicted king, "The fool that I am, I take all these natural acts of hers as deliberate coquetries specially meant to attract me."[48]

How often in closely and minutely examining the pros and cons of an intricate problem and hesitating between "to do" and "not to do", are valuable opportunities lost? Quick decision and prompt action although it may appear rash often meets with signal success.[49]

Man lives on hope and much more so does the woman. If hope is utterly destroyed a woman's life is not worth a moment's purchase; perhaps her nature is more optimistic and emotional and therefore desperately clings to hope.[50]

A hastily and secretly contracted alliance with a person whose nature and temperament is almost a sealed book to the other party very often results in eventual hostility and repulsion. Hence Śārṅgarava says that a marital tie should never be formed in secret, without carefully probing into and fully understanding the nature and disposition of the intended mate. This valuable piece of advice should be carefully laid to heart especially by young and impulsive girls in all ages and in all climes.[51]

A person in his stark ignorance and infatuation may often contemptuously reject precious boons and such fatal

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48. *Śākuntala* II. 2 : कामी स्वतां पश्यति ।

49. „ I. 20 : वयं तत्त्वान्वेषान्मधुकर हतास्त्वं खलु कृती ।

50. „ IV. 15 : गुर्वपि विरहदुःखमाशाबन्धः साहयति ।

51. „ V. 24 : अज्ञातहृदयेष्वेवं वैरीभवति सौहृदम् ।

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indiscretion he may deeply regret during the rest of his life. A beautiful garland of fragrant flowers thrown around his neck, a blind man may hastily throw away with horror mistaking it for a fearful serpent. Śakuntalā, the very embodiment of good fortune and the means of the much desired perpetuation of his royal race, comes of her own accord to meet him and the king in his deplorable ignorance casts her off without a moment's thought or hesitation. The word तमस् in this verse is very cleverly used to mean blindness or ignorance.[52]

This sound and very useful piece of advice is meant especially for the conservative and the orthodox who always pretend to live in the past and have a horror of new ideas and innovations. They assess the value of everything by applying to it the test of antiquity. This tendency if given free rein will effectually bar all progress of science, literature and every other sphere of knowledge and art and render society stagnant and lifeless. The orthodox and the conservative who are known as सनातनीs in Hindu society insist that people should be ruled by the edicts of Manu, Yājñavalkya, Parāśara and other ancient sages and law-givers to the end of time without the least change or deviation. The poet was trying to make a vigorous start towards the pinnacle of fame and public recognition which he ultimately achieved, and had to cross the hurdle of conservatism and orthodoxy which insistently held that good poetry and drama had already uttered their last word from the mouths of Bhāsa, Saumilla, Kaviputra and other old poets and dramatists.[53]

A great number of people may have distaste for religion, philosophy or science as dry and uninteresting subjects. But drama which deals with the limitless wealth of emotions, aspirations and eccentricities of human nature has always

52. *Śākuntala* VII. 24 :

प्रबलतमसामेवंप्रायाः शुभेषु प्रवृत्तयः
स्वजमपि शिरस्यन्वः क्षिप्तां धुनोत्यहिशङ्कया ।

53. *Mālavikāgnimitra* I. 2 : पुराणमित्येव न साधु सर्वम् ।

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a resistless appeal to average man.[54] This dictum appears to be mostly unimpeachable.

In ancient India preceptors, who were almost wholly of the Brahmin class, as a rule never thought of charging any fees to their students and in their forest academies, of which they were called the कुलपतिs (i.e. Chancellors), and which were away from the busy haunts of worldly temptations, imparted free education to their students and also fed them free of cost. No doubt living was cheap and simple in those good old days, and kings and rich people also made voluntary gifts and regular donations to such institutions. For a Brahmin it was considered a sinful act to impart knowledge for monetary or such other consideration, for knowledge was not considered a saleable commodity at that time.[55] The great veneration in which teachers were then held was due to their absence of the mercenary taint as well as their high character and spiritual eminence. The old sages had no use of accumulated wealth, as Brahmins by the laws of their caste were forbidden from hoarding wealth. Gaṇadāsa, in whose mouth the couplet is put, was no doubt a salaried teacher. But what he means to say is that he does not work for his wages "alone" but his chief object is the service of fine arts. We find that in exceptional instances a *guru* claimed his reward from his pupil. Thus Droṇa claimed the conquest and humiliation of King Drupada who having been his co-student at one time had insulted him after he was crowned king.

Droṇa, the great warrior who unwittingly imparted the sacred mysteries of the science of archery to a low-caste man (किरात), demanded the gift of the toe of his right hand as his fee so that his pupil should be prevented from making use of his mastery of the great art. It is stated however that this किरात (Ekalavya, as he was called after he cut off his toe) attained his proficiency in archery by his devout

54. *Mālavikāgnimitra* I. 4 :
नाट्यं भिन्नरुचेर्जनस्य बहुधाप्येकं समाराधनम् ।

55. *Mālavikāgnimitra* I. 17 :
यस्यागमः केवलजीविकायै तं ज्ञानपण्यं वणिजं वदन्ति ।

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and determined attendance on only a clay image of Droṇa. If this part of the legend is true, the demand of Droṇa of the above-mentioned preceptor's fee was both unjust and tyrannical and is a sorry commentary on his character as a learned and pious Brahmin. Paraśurāma also played a similar trick on Karṇa the renowned warrior of the Mahābhārata fame. Being a hybrid offspring from the union of the Brahmin and the Kṣatriya races, there appears to have been much dross in the character of this great man. In Canto V of *Raghuvaṁśa,* Kautsa the disciple of Varatantu was also required to pay a very heavy fee for his education. But as stated therein, it was mostly the fault of the pupil which brought down the calamity on himself. These were, however, rare exceptions to the rule.

Mere intelligence in a servant is not enough. Of equal or even greater importance is his loyalty and affection for his master.[56] Very often difficult tasks are achieved by servants not due to their superior intelligence, but by their great devotion and love for their master. Vidūṣaka is usually a thick-headed person but the king thinks that his having hit upon and successfully carried out a clever plan to achieve his heart's desire was due to his great affection for him.

A girl, though born in a good family and possessing many inborn virtues, if not properly educated and trained does not become fit to be married to a desirable husband. In the present context, however, Parivrājikā does not refer to education and training, but to the formal investiture by the Queen of the status of royalty on Mālavikā. A jewel although extracted from a rich mine unless it is properly cut and polished does not become fit to be set in pure gold.[57]

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56. *Mālavikāgnimitra* IV. 6 :
न हि बुद्धिगुणेनैव सुहृदामर्थदर्शनम् ।
कार्यसिद्धिपथः सूक्ष्मः स्नेहेनाप्युपलभ्यते ॥

57. *Mālavikāgnimitra* V. 18 :
अप्याकरसमुत्पन्ना रत्नजातिरसंस्कृता ।
जातरूपेण कल्याणि नहि संयोगमर्हति ॥

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It is said that the course of true love never runs smooth. The greater the number of hurdles love has to negotiate the stronger waxes the passion and desire. What is acquired by strenuous efforts becomes the dearer on that account.[58]

Hard-earned comforts and prosperity are far more satisfying and are much better appreciated than pleasures which come to one as an accidental windfall. The दृष्टान्त is appropriate. To a person who is exhausted with the intense heat of the sun, a shady tree affords ineffable relief and joy which is incomprehensible to one who confines himself to the innermost and coolest part of the house.[59] The same sentiment is expressed also in *Mṛcchakaṭika* I. 10.[60] The heir to a large estate, born with a golden spoon in his mouth, loses most of its charm, because he comes by it without the least endeavour on his part and without the least experience of the privations and hardships which poverty entails.

The observation of the poet quoted below[61] is pregnant with a great meaning. Two young people inflamed with surging passion firmly unite together like two pieces of iron which are heated red hot. If one piece alone is heated to proper pitch and the other left comparatively cold, complete welding would be impossible. The marriage of an adolescent, healthy and lusty girl with a middle-aged or old man will therefore never conduce to harmony and conjugal happiness.

The observation quoted below[62] has grown into a popular

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58. *Vikramorvaśīya* III. 8 :
नद्या इव प्रवाहो विषमशिलासंकटस्खलितवेगः ।
विघ्नितसमागमसुखो मनसिशयः शतगुणीभवति ॥

59. *Vikramorvaśīya* III. 21 :
यदेवोपनतं दुःखात्सुखं तदमवत्तरम् ।
निर्वाणाय तरुच्छाया तप्तस्य हि विशेषतः ॥

60. *Mṛcchakaṭika* I. 10 :
सुखं हि दुःखान्यनुभूय शोभते घनान्धकारेष्विव दीपदर्शनम् ।

61. *Vikramorvaśīya* II. 15 : तप्तेन तप्तमयसा घटनाय योग्यम् ।

62. „ IV. 27 : महदपि परदुःखं शीतलं सम्यगाहुः ।

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adage. It is very rare that the hardships of others are properly understood and appreciated. There is always a tendency to minimize and sometimes even to scoff at the agonies and privations of others.

It is better for a mendicant to meet with disappointment at the hands of a good and virtuous person than to extort benefits from the evil-minded.[63] To be obliged to the wicked, entails a moral and spiritual degradation. As Bhartṛhari says, supplication to a perverse and conceited person should be avoided at all costs.

A poor man especially when he becomes a याचक (mendicant) becomes lighter than a fleece of cotton.[64] Wealth is to be coveted because it gives stability, self-respect and independence to its owner. A cloud which is not surcharged with water is entirely at the mercy of the wind.[65] The plight of a poor man is aptly described in *Mṛcchakaṭika*.[66] Perhaps the poet himself in the course of his chequered life experienced the privations and humiliations due to poverty.

If every rich man were to deem himself to a reasonable extent a trustee for the benefit of the poor and the distressed, the present turbulent wave of bitter class war and class hatred would probably cease to poison the social atmosphere. It is the selfishness and hard-heartedness of most of the rich men, that gives rise to the calamity of socialism, Bolshevism and other pernicious "isms" involving humanity in perpetual strife and conflict.[67]

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63. *Meghadūta* I. 6 : याच्ञा मोघा वरमधिगुणे नाधमे लब्धकामा ।
Nītiśataka : प्रतिहतधियामञ्जलीः ।

64. *Subhāṣita-Ratna-Bhāṇḍāgāra* :
तृणादपि लघुस्तूलस्तूलादपि च याचकः ।

65. *Meghadūta* I. 20 : रिक्तः सर्वो भवति हि लघुः पूर्णता गौरवाय ।

66. *Mṛcchakaṭika* I. 14 :
दारिद्र्यादप्रियमेति ह्रीपरिगतः प्रभ्रश्यते तेजसो
निस्तेजाः परिभूयते परिभवान्निर्वेदमापद्यते ।

67. *Meghadūta* I. 53 : आपन्नार्तिप्रशमनफलाः संपदो ह्युत्तमानाम् ।

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The wheel of fortune is ever rotating, so that the rich and the poor are exchanging positions at short intervals. The bloated rich in his infatuation may delude himself with the consoling belief that wealth has come to stay in his family till doomsday but as a general rule opulence does not continue in one family for more than a few generations at the longest.[68] This wise dictum of the poet is a veritable consolation to the poor and the distressed and a warning to the insolent rich.

"How are you?", "Are you keeping well?' is the first inquiry which one makes on meeting a friend or acquaintance because life itself is perilous, uncertain and evanescent.[69]

"Out of sight, out of mind" is not true of genuine love and affection. The attachment of a loving mother to her son or of an affectionate and loyal wife to her husband does not deteriorate or decay with lapse of time. On the contrary long separation invests such attachment with a new edge or greater intensity so that it becomes an absorbing passion.[70]

In the case of good men, the answer to a request is not mere promise or hopeful words, but the prompt fulfilment of the desire of the mendicant. A cloud in the months of Śrāvaṇa and Bhādrapada (August and September) never thunders, but silently pours down precious water. A person who talks much can hardly be credited to grant the desired boon. Silence accompanied by fruitful and prompt action is the motto of the good and obliging persons.[71]

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68. *Meghadūta* II. 46 :
कस्यात्यन्तं सुखमुपनतं दुःखमेकान्ततो वा नीचैर्गच्छत्युपरि च दशा चक्रनेमिक्रमेण।

69. *Meghadūta* II. 38 :
अव्यापन्नः कुशलमबले पृच्छति त्वां वियुक्तः पूर्वाभाष्यं सुलभविपदां प्राणिनामेतदेव।

70. *Meghadūta* II. 49 :
स्नेहानाहु किमपि विरहे ध्वंसिनस्ते त्वभोगा-
दिष्टे वस्तुन्युपचितरसा प्रेमराशीभवन्ति।

71. *Meghadūta* II. 51 : प्रत्युक्तं हि प्रणयिषु सतामीप्सितार्थक्रियैव।

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CHAPTER XVII

FEMALE PSYCHOLOGY

The poet's intimate and varied knowledge of erotics and female psychology is one of the conspicuous features of his dramatic pieces and poetry. His terse and epigrammatic style and highly cultured diction, which embody and convey his charming message of sex-love, are almost inimitable. *Raghuvaṁśa* which soars aloft on a high moral and spiritual level mostly deals with the poet's lofty ideals of kingship in the description of Dilīpa, Raghu, Aja, Daśaratha, Rāma and Atithi, and also delights in giving beautiful word pictures of the solitary, peaceful and holy Āśramas and in part is devoted to the narration of the martial exploits of Raghu, Aja and Rāma. There is therefore little scope in that great epic of the Raghu race for mere amorous dalliance and passion pranks of man and woman in the spring-tide of their life except in Canto XIX which depicts the open, undisguised and sometimes crude eroticism of an abandoned libertine. *Kumārasambhava* is far richer in the description of the varied aspects of the erotic experiences and complexities of adolescent conjugal love. But the poet moves here on a delicate and somewhat difficult ground. The hero of this love theme is the hoary ages-old father of the universe, an ascetic, and a Yogin of Yogins. It is stated that he had to yoke himself again to the chariot-wheel of married life to save the gods from the unbearable thraldom of the mighty and wicked demon Tāraka.[1]

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1. *Kumārasambhava* VI. 26 : विदितं वो यथा स्वार्था न मे काश्चिव्यवृत्तयः ।
„ VI. 27 :
सोऽहं तृष्णातुरैर्वृष्टिं विद्युत्वानिव चातकैः ।
अरिविप्रकृतैर्देवैः प्रसूतिं प्रति याचितः ॥

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It becomes a matter of no little surprise therefore that Agni had to bitterly complain about him, that he spent about a hundred years in celebrating his honeymoon following on his marriage with Pārvatī, and thus kept poor Indra on the tenterhooks all this while, awaiting for some sign of his deliverance.[2]

Such headlong and unremitting addiction to sensual pleasures hardly fits in with the revered character of the Great God. Drinking deep of the wine begotten of the कल्पवृक्ष and complete and unrestrained abandonment to sexual pleasures as is described in *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 83 might have passed muster as a natural weakness in a common mortal like Agnivarṇa or Purūravas but appears grotesque and totally incongruous in the case of the divine Śaṅkara. According to the accepted standard of conventional morality, an old man lays himself open to censure by such utter libertinage. "The old man ought to know better" say his friends and neighbours! It is true that Śaṅkara although the oldest of the old was immune from the infirmities of old age; but it is well-known that old age itself, even without its concomitant infirmities or decrepitude in the case of a well-regulated mind, almost always brings along with it a well-balanced temperament, restraint, sobriety, and even a satiety of mere carnal pleasures. While reading Canto VIII of *Kumārasambhava,* a reader cannot escape from a feeling of impropriety (पाविन्यविडम्बन) and unreality and cannot avoid the feeling that the Great God has not been treated with the veneration and respect due to him. Kālidāsa perhaps may not agree with this view as he appears to think that inexhaustible and superhuman sexual potency is a quality of which even a Divine Being may be proud! We must not however lose sight of the view-point that Cantos VIII-XVII of *Kumārasambhava* may have been the work of a lesser poet although they pass under the name of Kālidāsa, as also of the fact that in *Śākuntala* the sex

2. *Kumārasambhava* IX. 8 :
त्वया प्रियाप्रेमवशंवदेन शतं व्यतीते सुरताद्तूनाम् ।
रहःस्थितेन त्वदवीक्षणार्तो दैन्यं परं प्राप सुरः सुरेन्द्रः ॥

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life of the young heroine has been portrayed with artistic restraint, admirable good taste and delicacy of touch which are in striking contrast with the lavish description of the sexual life of Śaṅkara and Pārvatī in *Kumārasambhava*. With these remarks which are made with great reluctance and with due respect to the great poet we turn to the subject in hand.

In *Vikramorvaśīya* the heroine is a celestial courtezan and the sex life therefore described in that drama is of a frank and undisguised nature appropriate to a mature woman with wide and varied erotic experience.

Mālavikāgnimitra is mainly a story of complex love intrigue whereof the wily Viḍūṣaka is the central figure. The work, however, contains some shrewd observations about female psychology in general.

Meghadūta principally deals with विप्रलम्भशृङ्गार and the mental reactions of a *proṣitabhartṛkā* and of her lover afflicted with the pangs of separation. The prevailing sentiment is करुण (pathos). शृङ्गार (erotics) is meant to be merely accessory and helpful.

Eve all the world over is essentially the same. Her mannerisms and mental reactions, however, are found to vary in different climes and environments. In Act I of *Śākuntala* the king asks the heroine a simple and formal question "अपि तपो वर्धते ?" (Is your spiritual life prospering?) Instead of giving him a straight reply, why should the heroine hang down her head in consternation and shyness? Only a Hindu girl can understand and explain the inner meaning of such an apparently silly conduct. At the sight of the handsome prince, the blossoming young heroine feels the first impact of that strange and powerful emotion which ultimately brings the maid and swain together. The poet has his own explanation for this phenomenon. In *Meghadūta* I. 28 he says, "Confusion and consternation in the presence of the loved one, express and convey the first love overture and sex appeal of a young woman".[3] A western girl would meet the situation by a straight and

3. *Meghadūta* I. 28 : स्त्रीणामाद्यं प्रणयवचनं विभ्रमो हि प्रियेषु ।

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polite reply very probably accompanied by an inviting and archly suggestive smile. In India the mind of a young girl is moulded otherwise. The utter confusion and overpowering trepidation of Pārvatī on discovering Śaṅkara in the guise of the ब्रटु is an instance in point. The incident is graphically described in a beautiful verse of *Kumārasambhava* (V. 85): "She could not move, neither could she remain stationary!" This is साध्वस or सात्त्विक शृङ्गार conveying a restrained maidenly sex appeal to the beloved person.

When Aja, after vanquishing the kings arrayed against him and obstructing his way by the use of the गान्धर्वसंमोहनास्त्र, greeted his newly wedded wife Indumatī, she felicitated him on his memorable victory by words from her friend's mouth. The simile here is noteworthy. She (Indumatī), owing to her great anxiety regarding the result of the unequal contest in which Aja was engaged, appeared like a parched forest glade which, after copious showers, tenders its joyous thanks to the beneficent cloud by the voice of the shrieking peacock.[4]

Another charming interplay of amorous emotions is the studious avoidance by a love-sick girl of direct parley with the coveted one, although her ears greedily drink every word he utters. She never looks straight at him, yet her sight has no other object.[5] The glances she casts on him are oblique, illusive and shy. When the lover is absent, she makes a firm resolve to have a full and satisfying view of his form and face ; when however he is seen again, alas ! the resolve melts away and she cannot muster enough courage to have a straight and full look at him.[6]

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4. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 69 :
स्थली नवाम्भःपृषताभिवृष्टा मयूरकेकाभिरिवाभ्रवृन्दम् ।

5. *Śākuntala* I. 27 :
वाचं न मिश्रयति यद्यपि मद्वचोभिः कर्णं ददात्यभिमुखं मयि भाषमाणे ।
कामं न तिष्ठति मदाननसंमुखीना भूयिष्ठमन्यविषया न तु दृष्टिरस्याः ॥

6. *Śākuntala* II. 11 :
अभिमुखे मयि संहृतमीक्षणं हसितमन्यनिमित्तकृतोदयम् ।
विनयवारितवृत्तिरतस्तया न विवृतो मदनो न च संवृतः ॥

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The king says: "When I looked at her she averted her face. The innermost upsurging joy at the birth of a new love finds an outlet in involuntary smiles and simpers for which she is hard put to it to invent ever fresh pretexts. Innate modesty prompts her to conceal her passion for a man who is almost a stranger, but somehow or other the turbulent feeling manifests itself in various ways in her outward appearance and deportment."

Śakuntalā, the young fraud, wants very much to have a last fond look at her newly found lover, but owing to the near presence of her friends, especially the mischievous and ever alert Priyaṁvadā, she finds it difficult to do so. She therefore makes the clever pretence that her foot is pricked with the sharp point of a दर्भ blade and that her garment at the same time has got entangled in a thorny shrub.[7]

Urvaśī resorts to the same stratagem to serve a similar end. These are instances of the natural wiliness of young girls who when taking leave of their beloved in the presence of strangers or elders, manage somehow or other to cast a last lingering glance at them. Bhavabhūti beautifully describes such lovely gesture on the part of the heroine in *Malatīmādhava*.[8]

Jagannātha Paṇḍita in a beautiful verse describes the clever ruse whereby a young girl conveys an intimate message to her beloved, even when surrounded by elders.[9]

Mālavikāgnimitra IV. 8 :

कात्स्न्र्येन निर्वर्णयितुं च रूपमिच्छन्ति तत्पूर्वसमागमानाम् ।
न च प्रियेष्वायतलोचनानां समग्रवृत्तीनि विलोचनानि ॥

7. *Śākuntala* II. 12 :

दर्भाङ्कुरेण चरणः क्षत इत्यकाण्डे तन्वी स्थिता कतिचिदेव पदानि गत्वा ।
आसीद्विवृत्तवदना च विमोचयन्ती शाखासु वल्कलमसक्तमपि द्रुमाणाम् ॥

8. *Malatīmādhava* I. 32 :

यान्त्या मुहुर्वलितकन्धरमाननं तदावृत्तवृन्तशतपत्रनिभं वहन्त्या ।
दिग्धोऽमृतेन च विषेण च पक्ष्मलाक्ष्या गाढं निखात इव मे हृदये कटाक्षः ॥

9. *Bhāminīvilāsa* :

गुरुभिः परिवेल्लितापि गण्डस्थलकण्डूयनचारुकैतवेन ।
दरदर्शितहेमबाहुनाला मयि बाला नयनाञ्चलं चकार ॥

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Kisses and embraces are not even at the present times lavishly conferred by Indian girls on their favourites and in ancient times when Kālidāsa lived and wrote, although late marriages and comparative relaxation of parental control were in vogue, the girls exercised much restraint in their dealing with the opposite sex and innate modesty and reserve appear as a rule to have been the valued heritage of the Indian women.

In Kālidāsa's time this reluctance to premature or premarital amorous dalliance on the part of young people was much more pronounced. A kiss was indeed a very precious boon to be rarely bestowed on a very fortunate lover! अङ्कपाली or embrace or necking was much more difficult of attainment. Convention tabooed such intimate contacts before marriage, and even after marriage for some days an unsophisticated young girl was not over-willing to concede such liberties. The first meeting of a girl with her newly wedded husband or her lover is graphically described by Kālidāsa.[10]

In Harṣa's *Ratnāvalī* we find an exactly similar verse.[11] The same author has described a similar situation in *Nāgānanda* in almost similar words.

It appears that Sanskrit poets are very much enamoured of the natural coyness and restraint on the part of young girls in their first approach to sexual union, which, it was

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10. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 7, 8, 9 and 14.
Mālavikāgnimitra IV. 15 :
हस्तं कम्पयते रुणद्धि रशनाव्यापारलोलाङ्गुलीः
स्वौ हस्तौ नयति स्तनावरणतामालिङ्गयमाना बलात् ।
पातुं पक्ष्मलनेत्रमुन्नमयतः साचीकरोत्याननं
व्याजेनाप्यभिलाषपूरणसुखं निर्वर्तयत्येव मे ॥

11. *Ratnāvalī* III. 9 :
प्रणयविशदां दृष्टिं वक्त्रे ददाति न शङ्किता
घटयति घनं कण्ठाश्लेषे रसान्न पयोधरौ ।
वदति बहुशो गच्छामीति प्रयत्नधृताप्यहो
रमयतितरां संकेतस्था तथापि हि कामिनी ॥

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considered, lends an added charm and zest to the sex appeal.

The poet very cleverly records another peculiar trait in marriageable young girls. They love to affect indifference to the subject of their marriage and choice of a fitting husband, which however is their main obsession at the time. Pārvatī practised unheard of penance to become the loved consort of the great god Śaṅkara. But when the seven sages were soliciting her hand for Śaṅkara she was with ostentatious indifference counting the petals of a lotus with a bent head![12]

A married girl in expectation of an early union with her husband develops an ineffable physical charm partly due to her nervousness at the approach of an altogether new experience as also to a natural craving for the company of her mate. It is this interesting phase of indescribable longing, trepidation and intense curiosity which is aptly described by Bhavabhūti in *Uttararāmacarita*: "Under the cover of chaste virginity (मुग्धत्व) and impeccable innocence, a veritable volcano of passion, undefined longing, curiosity and restless sweet expectation is very often found smouldering in the heart of a budding young girl."[13]

The apparent perverseness and reserve of a newly wedded girl on the threshold of her married life must be treated by the husband with great patience and consideration. Vātsyāyana, the celebrated writer on the science of erotics, has laid down minute rules as to the proper approach by the husband to the coy and apparently reluctant wife under these circumstances.

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12. *Kumārasambhava* VI. 84 :
एवंवादिनि देवर्षौ पार्श्वे पितुरधोमुखी ।
लीलाकमलपत्राणि गणयामास पार्वती ॥

13. *Uttararāmacarita* VI. 35 :
वयःस्नेहाकूतव्यतिकरघनो यत्र मदनः
प्रगल्भव्यापारः स्फुरति हृदि मुग्धश्च वपुषि ।

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The verses below[14] may also be said to be instances of apparent resistance and willing surrender. Cynics therefore remark that a woman's "no" may be safely considered as tantamount to "yes".

The same mental attitude of the new girl recruit to the nuptial bed is further described. "Kissing may be permissible, but no bites on the lips please! Nails may be used but so as not to cause deep and painful indents. The lover may satisfy his desire, but no rough usage would be tolerated under any pretext."[15]

A normal girl necessarily takes some time to reach the full tide of her sex life.[16] During the probative period, however, the husband should put a strong curb on his turbulent passion and treat his consort with great consideration and unwearied patience. This is fully worth his while, and the smooth and pleasant tenor of future married life depends on such self-restraint at this critical period. Injudicious and brutal haste to satisfy selfish lust destroys once for all the sweet romance, purity and lasting affection of married life. This is the great lesson which the poet is trying to inculcate on the fresh male initiate to married life.

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14. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 2 :
व्याहृता प्रतिवचो न संदधे गन्तुमैच्छदवलम्बितांशुका ।
सेवते स्म शयनं पराङ्मुखी सा तथापि रतये पिनाकिनः ॥
Kumārasambhava VIII. 4 :
नाभिदेशनिहितः सकम्पया शङ्करस्य रुरुधे तया करः ।
तद्दुकूलमथ चाभवत्स्वयं दूरमुच्छ्वसितनीविबन्धनम् ॥
Kumārasambhava VIII. 8 :
चुम्बनेष्वधरदानवर्जितं खिन्नहस्तसदयोपगूहनम् ।
क्लिष्टमन्मथमपि प्रियं प्रभोर्दुर्लभप्रतिकृतं वधूरतम् ॥

15. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 9 :
यन्मुखग्रहणमक्षताधरं दानमव्रणपदं नखस्य यत् ।
यद्रतं च सदयं प्रियस्य तत्पार्वती विषहते स्म नेतरत् ॥

16. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 13 :
ज्ञातमन्मथरसा शनैः शनैः सा मुमोच रतिदुःखशीलताम् ।
Kumārasambhava VIII. 14-17.

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Vv. 5-10 of Canto VII of *Kumārasambhava* (and vv. 6-15 of Canto VII of *Raghuvaṁśa*) embody a truly realistic touch! The sight of the newly-wedded bride and bridegroom and the marriage procession have an indescribable fascination for women of all ages and conditions. The precipitate, reckless, and almost childish haste to witness the marriage procession of Śiva and Pārvatī (and also of Aja and Indumatī) and the casual remarks of the ladies on the occasion are a veritable manifestation of the "eternal feminine".

Women sometimes resort to charming tricks to achieve their heart's desire.[17] The girls enjoying the swing in company of their lovers, feint an imminent fall as a pretext for achieving the pleasure of their close embrace.

Trust even a delicate woman to patiently bear, nay, even enjoy, a rough usage from her lover. Daśaratha came to Mithilā by invitation of Janaka to witness the wedding of his sons with the latter's daughter and nieces. His large army equipped with mighty elephants laid waste a large part of the suburban gardens of the capital (Mithilā). The citizens, instead of resenting the wanton treatment, appeared like a love-sick girl to be happy about it. The simile is characteristic of the poet's style.

Feminine wiles and subterfuges in delicate love situations are limitless.[18]

Urvaśī at the very first sight of king Purūravas conceives a strong passion for him. Owing to the jolting

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17. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 46 :
अनुभवन्नवदोलमृतूत्सवं पटुरपि प्रियकण्ठजिघृक्षया ।
अनयदासनरज्जुपरिग्रहे भुजलतां जलतासबलाजनः ॥
Raghuvaṁśa XIX. 41.

18. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act I, v. 20 :
उर्वशी—हला, किमपि परतोऽपसर ।
चित्रलेखा—नाहं शक्नोमि ।
Vikramorvaśīya Act I, p. 23 :
उर्वशी—अहो, लताविटप एकावली लग्ना । चित्रलेखे, मोचय तावदेनाम् ।
चित्रलेखा—आम्, दृढं खलु लग्ना सा । अशक्या मोचयितुम् ।

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motion of the chariot, she slightly collides with him. Although she was intensely thrilled at the touch, she affects to be somewhat annoyed at this inadvertent violation of her modesty and requests her friend Citralekhā to make more space for her by moving a little further away. Citralekhā, with the sixth sense with which ladies are endowed, fully understands and appreciates the ticklish situation and refuses to budge an inch. This is the kind of badinage of which girls are fond when they smell the sprouting of a new and fresh passion.

In appraising the correct nature of the male sentiment towards them the ladies are gifted with a wonderful intuition.[19] No trash or tinsel in the shape of pretended or counterfeit love will pass muster with them. An expert jeweller will not be deceived by a gaudily coloured bauble and mistake it for a genuine jewel.

Fascinating little tricks and feints make the period of young and impassioned love an inexhaustible source of joyous surprises and unforgettable thrills. Urvaśī being an accomplished courtezan is well-versed in these devices of provoking and inflaming passion. The sweet jingling sound of the anklets of a young girl who is herself invisible and is moving with the art and grace of an accomplished dancer, her sudden coming from behind and closing the eyes of her lover with her lotus-like palms, the affected coyness and apparent reluctance to meet the lover in privacy—these are part of the stock-in-trade of young mischievous girlhood intended to whet the desire of their mates.[20]

In Hindu society pictured by Kālidāsa, it was not al-

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19. *Vikramorvaśīya* II. 21 :
प्रियवचनकृतोऽपि योषितां दयितजनानुनयो रसादते ।
प्रविशति हृदयं न तद्विदां मणिरिव कृत्रिमरागयोजितः ॥
Mālavikāgnimitra III. 3 :
उपचारविधिर्मनस्विनीनां न तु पूर्वाभ्यधिकोऽपि भावशून्यः ।

20. *Vikramorvaśīya* III. 15 :
गूढा नूपुरशब्दमात्रमपि मे कान्ता श्रुतौ पातयेत् ।

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ways possible or easy for the maid and swain to meet each other, and hence the necessity of a दूती or पीठमर्दिका (पाठराखीण Mar.). In royal household दूतीs or love messengers carried on a prosperous and important trade and exercised considerable influence.[21]

There is no fun in bringing together persons of opposite sex of whom one is indifferent to the attractions of the other but is pining for that other's company.[22] Almost the same sentiment is expressed in "तत्तेन तत्समया घटनाय योग्यम्". Unless both the parties are equally aflame with passion and desire for each other's company, there cannot be any real pleasure in the union of the sexes.

Dhāriṇī says, "I am a full-blown matron with a youthful son. This is, therefore, not the time of my life to indulge in petty jealousies and love-intrigues." A woman who has passed the prime of her life, as a rule, becomes comparatively indifferent to the love adventures of her husband.[23]

It is said that in the case of a man love is only a part of his life, while in the case of a woman it is her entire life itself. When separated from her lover she lives entirely in the hope of being re-united to him. If such slender tie of hope is rudely sundered, there is nothing left for the bereaved maid but to pine away and die.[24]

Abhisārikās are girls in search of extra-marital liaisons. This feature of sex life doubtlessly exists in every country and community although it is the fashion to turn the blind eye to its existence. On their way to the meeting place with their lovers, overwhelmed by their impatience and intense desire, they move with such rapidity and reckless abandon that not only the flowers with which they have

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21. *Mālavikāgnimitra* III. 14 : स्थाने प्राणाः कामिनां दूत्यधीनाः ।

22. ,, III. 15 :
अनातुरोत्कण्ठितयोः प्रसिद्ध्यता समागमेनापि रतिर्न मां प्रति ।
परस्परप्राप्तिनिराशयोर्वरं शरीरनाशोऽपि समानुरागयोः ॥

23. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act IV, p. 79 : न मे मत्सरस्यैष कालः ।

24. *Meghadūta* I. 10 :
आशाबन्धः कुसुमसदृशं प्रायशो ह्यङ्गनानां सद्यःपाति प्रणयि हृदयं विप्रयोगे रुणद्धि ।

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decorated themselves but even the pearls of their broken necklaces strew their path although they are hardly aware of it !![25]

The usual occupations of a विरहिणी as described by the poet in *Meghadūta* are as follows[26]: The worship of the family deities in the hope that by their favour the period of separation from the husband may be as short as possible; drawing a picture of the absent husband who, she flatters herself, has also become weak and emaciated like herself owing to separation from her; a loving word off and on with her pet birds or beasts to ascertain whether they also remember their absent master; an attempt to sing some melody wherein his name is conspicuously mentioned; counting the remaining days of separation; having an imaginary intercourse with him;—such are some of the pre-occupations by which the विरहिणी tries to beguile the hard days of her separation from her husband.

A Hindu woman does not as a rule convey her message of love by words. She never openly says, "Darling! I love you!" like her western sister. She has, however, a better, more effective and charming way of imparting her sweet secret.[27] The sidelong glances, suggestive movements of the eyebrows, and insinuating smile, slight perspiration and tremor of the body, a sudden access of coyness, are the ways used by girls to acquaint the lover of his good fortune (सौभाग्य). Whether the frank outburst "I love you, darling" is as effective and appealing as the eloquent language of the body indicated above, will mostly depend on the taste and temperament of the lover.

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25. *Meghadūta* II. 9 :
गत्युत्कम्पादलकपतितैर्यत्र मन्दारपुष्पैः पत्रच्छेदैः कनककमलैः कर्णविभ्रंशिभिश्च ।
मुक्ताजालैः स्तनपरिसरच्छिन्नसूत्रैश्च हारैर्नैशो मार्गः सवितुरुदये सूच्यते कामिनीनाम् ॥

26. *Meghadūta* II. 22-24.

27. ,, I. 28 : स्त्रीणामाद्यं प्रणयवचनं विभ्रमो हि प्रियेषु ।

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Chapter XVIII

FLORA OR PLANT LIFE

Kālidāsa has a characteristic flair for giving realistic details of plant life and his writings bristle with beautiful allusions to various plants in their relation to human life and sentiments. Like the English poet Wordsworth Kālidāsa is a Nature poet of great eminence.

The Indians from very early times have discovered and realized the mysterious link of sympathy and attraction which exists between plant life and human life. The well-known verse given below[1] illustrates how human acts and overtures react on plants and, although more or less fancifully, clearly admits that the plants are sentient and sympathetic to human affection and feelings. "The Priyaṅgu creeper blossoms when touched by a woman, the Bakula tree flowers when sprinkled with a mouthful of wine by a woman, the Aśoka when struck by a damsel's foot (adorned with anklets), the Tilaka by a mere glance, the Kurabaka when embraced, the Mandāra by the cracking of a joke, the Campaka by a meaning and soft smile, the Cūta by the breeze blown from the mouth, the Nameru by a song and the Karṇikāra by a woman dancing in front of it. It is, however, always the woman who alone can exert this benign influence and that too presumably a young and beautiful woman."

It is also noteworthy that the five arrows of the God of Love with which he subjugates the whole universe are

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1. स्त्रीणां स्पर्शात्प्रियङ्गुर्विकसति बकुलः सीधुगण्डूषसेकात्
पादाघाताद्दशोकस्तिलककुरबको वीक्षणालिङ्गनाभ्याम् ।
मन्दारो नर्मवाक्यात्पटुमृदुहसनाच्चम्पको वक्त्रवातात्
चूतो गीतान्नमेरुर्विकसति च पुरो नर्तनात्कर्णिकारः ॥

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fashioned out of flowers.[2]

Thus the human world and the vegetable world are said to act and react on each other in various ways. In Āyurveda literature the names of about a thousand herbs are mentioned, but detailed descriptions of such herbs are not available. In poetic literature some more details are given but Kālidāsa undoubtedly takes the lead in that respect. The subject, however, still bristles with difficulties and admits of limitless difference of opinion. Without laying any claim to a special or detailed study of the subject, it is attempted here to enumerate and describe some plants and trees as are mentioned in Kālidāsa's writings, with a view to illustrate his inimitable style of dealing with that subject.

CŪTA (the mango tree)—*Mangifera Indica* (Vasanta and Grīṣma): There are two varieties of this tree. One belongs to the jungle or is of natural growth. This tree grows to a great height and bears plentiful fruit for many years. The second variety is nurtured or reared by grafting and other similar devices. This latter grows in circumference but does not attain to much height. The mango is the king of fruit trees in India. Its fruit, when fully ripe, is four to five inches in length and three to four inches in breadth. It has generally an oblong shape and a yellow golden colour. It is juicy and luscious and emits a very attractive smell. There are numerous varieties of this fruit, most of them highly relished and much in demand. The quality of the fruit of the grafted or artificial kind is much superior.

These trees put forth a sweet smelling blossom (आम्रमञ्जरी) in the beginning of spring. This blossom at the beginning is slightly tinged with green and scarlet colour. When the tree is in full blossom, it fills the air with a sweet and intoxicating odour. The mango blossom is considered to be perhaps the most potent arrow of the God of Love.[3]

2. अरविन्दमशोकश्च चूतं च नवमल्लिका ।
नीलोत्पलं च पञ्चैते पञ्चबाणस्य सायकाः ॥

3. *Kumārasambhava* IV. 14.

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This tree has a thick and pleasant shade. The cuckoo (कोकिल), the harbinger of the advent of the vernal season (Vasanta) has a great partiality for the mango tree which is its favourite resort.[4] It is supposed that his notes are sweetened and rendered more appealing and melodious when the bird feeds on the sprouting blossom and the fruit of the mango tree.[5]

When the God of Love visited Indra by his special invitation in Canto II of *Kumārasambhava*, he was, as a matter of course, followed by his inseparable companion and chief lieutenant the spring (मधुमास) who held in his hand the former's chief weapon, viz., the fresh blossom of the mango tree.[6] The bees also are inordinately fond of the mango blossom, so that in the beginning of the spring season these trees are full of the murmuring music of clustering bees.[7]

In *Śākuntala* a Navamallikā creeper which is named Vanajyotsnā is fancied to be the fitting consort of the mango tree (आम्रवृक्ष) whereon it usually succeeds in climbing.[8]

In Act VI of Śākuntala a चेटी i.e. young servant girl, overjoyed at the advent of the vernal season, essays to make an offering of the new blossom to the God of Love.[9]

The agonies of lovers especially separated from their mates are intensified when the mango tree puts forth its sweet-smelling blossom in early spring.[10]

In *Meghadūta* the Sānumat mountain whose flanks were covered all around with mango trees heavily laden with ripe yellow fruit and on whose summit the cloud is resting for the time being is compared to a breast of the

4. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 14.
5. *Kumārasambhava* III. 32.
6. „ II. 64.
7. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 17.
8. *Śākuntala* IV. 12:
चूतेन संश्रितवती नवमालिकेयमस्यामहं त्वयि च संप्रति वीतचिन्तः ।
9. *Śākuntala* VI. 3.
10. *Vikramorvaśīya* II. 6:
किमुत मलयवातोन्मूलितापाण्डुपत्रैरुपवनसहकारैर्दर्शितेष्वङ्कुरेषु ।

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mother Earth, yellow on all sides and bluish black at the top.[11]

Cūta is supposed to burst into efflorescence when a young woman favours him with a song (चूतो गीतात्).

The adolescence of spring time is indicated by the ripening blossoms of the mango tree.[12]

References to this beautiful tree, its blossom, its companions the cuckoo and the bees, pervade the entire range of Sanskrit poetic literature and it is needless to multiply such references.

SAHAKĀRA—Mangifera Indica (Grīṣma) : Sahakāra is a variety of the mango tree. Either it is the grafted kind which yields a more luscious fruit than the tree of wild growth or it indicates a condition of the tree in the latter half of the hot season when it is laden with ripe and sweet-smelling fruits.[13]

The expression "आम्रतेव सहकारतां ययौ"[14] may be construed in two ways : (1) like a mango tree which under peculiar conditions when laden with ripe fruit becomes a Sahakāra, Pārvatī became a blooming, blushing, passionate mate under the influence of wine; (2) like the Āmra which is changed into a Sahakāra by a special mysterious treatment, the timid and coy Pārvatī was changed under the influence of wine into a blood, sportive and passionate girl. Mallinātha appears to favour the latter construction.

Sahakāra figures conspicuously in Grīṣma[15] (hot season) and Vasanta[16] (spring).

The expression सहकारलता in *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 33 may mean either (1) a creeper which takes shelter on a mango tree, (2) or a small twig of the blossoming सहकार. Mallinātha appears to favour the former construction.

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11. *Meghadūta* I. 18.
12. *Vikramorvaśīya* II. 7 : ईषद्वद्धरजःकणाग्रकपिशा चूते नवा मञ्जरी
मुग्धत्वस्य च यौवनस्य च सखे मध्ये मधुश्रीः स्थिता।
13. आम्रभूतो रसालोऽसौ सहकारोऽतिसौरभः ।
14. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 78.
15. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 52.
16. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 22.

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AŚOKA—Saraca Indica (Vasanta): This tree figures conspicuously in Sanskrit literature. In *Rāmāyaṇa* Sītā is mentioned as resting in a grove or cluster of Aśoka trees (अशोकवन) when in the custody of Rāvaṇa. Aśoka flower is one of the arrows in the quiver of the God of Love.

Aśoka referred to in *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 16 is obviously रक्ताशोक which is a favourite variety of this tree.[17]

According to poetical tradition this tree is supposed to put forth profuse flowers if it is sportively struck with the foot of a beautiful young girl adored with jingling anklets.[18] The bereaved king Aja fancies that the Aśoka in front of him is shedding tears in the shape of its falling flowers remembering the precious favour of the touch of Indumatī's foot. In *Mālavikāgnimitra* the king blames the Aśoka tree for not putting forth abundant flowers the moment it was touched by Mālavikā's foot. In Canto III of *Kumārasambhava* the Aśoka trees near-about the penance grove of Śaṅkara are mentioned to have put forth fresh sprouts from their very trunks upward, even without the incentive of the touch of a young woman's foot, owing to the insetting of the spring season at an unusual time.[19]

In the plot of *Mālavikāgnimitra* the Aśoka plays an important part. Dhāriṇī the Queen, herself disabled due to a fall from the swing, deputes Mālavikā her attendant maid to perform the function of striking the Aśoka with the foot on her behalf, promising her that in case her overture proves successful she would be taken in her special favour. As good luck would have it, the tree, after the kicking

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17. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 16 :
आ मूलतो विद्रुमरागताम्रं सपल्लवाः पुष्पचयं दधानाः ।
कुर्वन्त्यशोका हृदयं सशोकं निरीक्ष्यमाणा नवयौवनानाम् ॥
Mālavikāgnimitra III. 5; *Meghadūta* II. 15.

18. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 63 :
स्मरतेव सशब्दनूपुरं चरणानुग्रहमन्यदुर्लभम् ।
अमुना कुसुमाश्रुवर्षिणा त्वमशोकेन सुगात्रि शोच्यसे ॥
Mālavikāgnimitra III. 17.

19. *Kumārasambhava* III. 26.

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ceremony, became overladen with flowers. Mālavikā thus became the queen's favourite and was saved from her somewhat precarious position of having been found in illicit love intrigue with the king.[20]

The blazing red colour of the Aśoka flower although without fragrance is very attractive and conspicuous. In *Vikramorvaśīya* the red सङ्गमनीय jewel visible high in the sky in the talons of the vulture, is fancied as a bouquet of the Aśoka flowers serving as an ear-ornament of that particular direction.[21]

तपनीयाशोक (with golden coloured or yellow flowers) also appears to be a favourite tree.[22]

PALĀŚA or *KIMŚUKA—Butea Frondosa* (Vasanta) : A tree with a profusion of flaming red flowers. Its flowering season is the spring. Hence in one place the poet compares the fresh sprouting buds of Palāśa to red nailmarks made on his body by his mistress the vernal season who is rendered shameless by the intensity of her erotic passion.[23]

The flowers of Palāśa (पळस Mar.) are bright scarlet and jungles of these trees clad in the profusion of such flowers create the illusion of a bright red garment worn by the forest tract, as if it were a newly-wedded bride.[24] (It was customary it appears for a newly-wedded bride to wear a red garment. In Maharashtra, the colour of the newly married girl's garment is generally green.)

Palāśa may also mean a leaf.[25] While on a hunting expedition Daśaratha wore an armour of the colour of leaves (green) so as not to scare away the beasts of the jungle.

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20. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act V, p. 87.
21. *Vikramorvaśīya* V. 3.
22. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act III, p. 46.
23. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 31 :
    उपहितं शिशिरापगमश्रिया मुकुलजालमशोभत किंशुके ।
    प्रणयिनीव नखक्षतमण्डनं प्रमदया मदयापितलज्जया ॥
24. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 19.
25. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 51.

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BAKULA or *KESARA—Mimusops Elengi* (Vasanta) : A fairly big tree with small round flowers with sweet and somewhat pungent smell. The peculiarity of these flowers is that even though dried in the sun they do not lose their smell, which lasts for a long time.[26]

It is said that the odour of the flowers of Bakula somewhat resembles that of a species of wine.[27] It is supposed that the tree puts forth maximum efflorescence if a mouthful of wine is sprinkled on it by a beautiful young woman.[28]

The fragrance of Bakula flowers is often likened to that of the breath of a young woman[29] (presumably because such breath was usually impregnated by the odour of liquor). It is but natural that such fragrant flowers should be stringed by women into garlands.

Reference to the Bakula flower ought to find place in the description of the spring. But curiously, the monsoon time is considered responsible[30] for the lovers' placing the Bakula garland in the tresses of young women ; perhaps this is made of dried flowers. In the Konkan tract the tree is known as ओवळ.

TILAKA—Sesamum Indicum (Vasanta) : There is some controversy regarding the identification of this tree. Its flowers are said to be like small white globules (hence they are compared to pearls) and grow in clusters. Their smell is sufficiently attractive to tempt the bees. These flowers were reputed to be like clusters of pearls and hence when in contact with bees looked like tresses of young women

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26. *Śākuntala* Act IV, p. 127.

27. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 30 :
सुवदनावदनासवसंभृतस्तदनुवादिगुणः कुसुमोद्गमः ।
मधुकरैरकरोन्मधुलोलुपैर्बकुलमाकुलमायतपङ्क्तिभिः ॥

28. विकसति बकुलः सीधुगण्डूषसेकात् ।

29. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 64 :
तव निःश्वसितानुकारिभिर्बकुलैरर्धचितां समं मया ।
असमाप्य विलासमेखलां किमिदं किन्नरकण्ठि सुप्यते ॥

30. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* II. 24.

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adorned with pearl netting.[31]

The bees sitting on Tilaka flowers are fancied to be a black spot on the forehead of the spring-time beauty of the forest.[32]

The Tilaka must be a fair-sized tree either in the Himalayan jungles or on the banks of some of the big rivers of the northern planes or this species may have become extinct in course of time.

Some connect this tree with the Tila or the sesamum plant which is somewhat like a thicket. But the flowers of this plant are unlike the description of Tilaka flowers given above, nor do the former have any appreciable smell.

PRIYĀLA—Buchnania Longifolia (Vasanta) : Mallinātha in his commentary to *Kumārasambhava* III. 31 relying on *Amarakośa* explains प्रियालद्रुम as राजादनवृक्ष. This tree appears to have clusters of blossom (मञ्जरी) like those of the mango tree, which are however full of powder-like pollens which can be wafted away by a strong breeze.[33]

PĀṬALA—Stereospermum Suaveolensa (Grīṣma) : This is a middle-sized tree having elongated red flowers possessing very sweet smell.

It was customary to mix Pāṭala flowers with wines in order to make them fragrant and aphrodisiac.[34]

There are many references to its attractive smell.[35]

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31. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 44 :
उपचितावयवा शुचिभिः कणैरलिकदम्बकयोगमुपेयुषी ।
सदृशकान्तिरलक्ष्यत मञ्जरी तिलकजालकजालकमौक्तिकैः ॥

32. *Mālavikāgnimitra* III. 5; *Kumārasambhava* III. 30.
Raghuvaṁśa IX. 41 :
अलिभिरञ्जनबिन्दुसनोहरैः कुसुमपङ्क्तिनिपातिभिरङ्कितः ।
न खलु शोभयति स्म वनस्थलीं न तिलकस्तिलकः प्रमदामिव ॥

33. *Kumārasambhava* III. 31.

34. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 46 :
यत्स लग्नसहकारमासवं रक्तपाटलसमागमं पपौ ।
तेन तस्य मधुनिर्गमात्कृशश्चित्तयोनिरभवत्पुनर्नवः ॥

35. *Śākuntala* I. 3; *Ṛtusaṁhāra* I. 28; *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 52.

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ARJUNA—Terminalia Arjuna (Grīṣma) : This tree is plentiful in the northern part of India. It has clusters of blossom in the latter part of the hot season which are somewhat similar to those of the mango tree.[36] They have a kind of sweet fragrance. It is supposed that this tree and Kakubha are one and the same. Arjuna is known as आइण in the southern part of India.

It appears that the efflorescence of this tree lasts even during the earlier part of the monsoon from the reference in Canto II of *Ṛtusaṁhāra* which is dedicated to the description of that season.[37]

KADAMBA—Stephegyne Parviflora (Varṣā) : It is supposed that Kadamba and Nīpa are two names of the same tree. This belief is however belied by *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 13.[38]

Kālidāsa therefore takes Nīpa and Kadamba as two different trees. This tree is known for its green thick shade. Its flowers are very small and cluster round the end of their branches. Nīpa appears to be its kindred species. In Konkan it is called Nīva.

This tree i.e. Kadamba is associated with वर्षाकाल which is its flowering season.

Its small flowers are compared to horripilation on the human body bursting out owing to pleasing physical contact with a long separated dear friend.[39]

Its flowers were used by ladies as ear-ornaments or as adornment of the hair.[40]

The flowers of this tree when in an immature stage

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36. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 51.

37. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* II. 17 :
कदम्बसर्जार्जुनकेतकीवनं विकम्पयंस्तत्कुसुमाधिवासितः ।

38. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 13.

39. *Meghadūta* I. 25.

40. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 60 :
रक्तकदम्बः सोऽयं प्रियया घर्मान्तशंसि यस्येदम् ।
कुसुमसमग्रकेसरविषममपि कृतं शिखाभरणम् ॥
Ṛtusaṁhāra II. 24.

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are of greenish brown colouring[41], and in the beginning of monsoon are said to incite amatory feeling.[42]

SARJA or *ŚĀLA* or *AŚVAKARṆA*—*Shorea Robusta* (Varṣā) : This is a stout tree of great height to be found in great numbers in the Himalayan valleys. Also found in some parts of Northern India. Puts forth flowers of five petals in the rainy season.[43]

NĪPA (Mar. नीव)—*Anthocephalus Cadamba* (Varṣā) : This tree is of the same species as Kadamba and puts forth flowers during the rainy season.[44] Nīpa and Kadamba although belonging to the same species are regarded as different trees.

SAPTACCHADA (Mar सांतवन)—*Alstonia Scholaris* (Śarad) : It is so called because it has seven leaves in each joint along its trunk. Its flowers are small and white. This tree emits an odour similar to the ruttings of an elephant.[45] Its foliage and flowering season is Śarad, i.e., the autumnal season.[46] The juice of the leaves of this tree has a medicinal value and is much used in Āyurveda medicines. It seems that the efflorescence of this tree is abundant and whitens the tracts wherein the trees are plentiful.[47]

KOVIDĀRA—*Bauhinia Variagata* (Śarad) : This is a small-sized tree mostly found in gardens. Its foliage and flowers are very much like those of the Kāñcana tree, but

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41. *Meghadūta* I. 21.
42. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 27.
43. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* II. 17; *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 13; III. 13.
44. „ III. 13.
Mṛcchakaṭika V. 35 :
एषा फुल्लकदम्बनीपसुरभौ काले घनोद्भासिते
कान्तस्यालयमागता समदना हृष्टा जलार्द्रालका ।
45. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 23; V. 48.
46. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 13.
47. „ III. 2 :
सप्तच्छदैः कुसुमभारनतैर्वनान्ताः शुक्लीकृतान्युपवनानि च मालतीभिः ।

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it is of a smaller size. The petals of its flower are of a rosy colour. Its flowering and foliage season is Śarad (autumn) It is said to possess wide and extensive branches, the ends of its leaves are delicate, and it has a profusion of flowers which are full of honey of which bees are very fond.[48] This description applies to the tree when it is at its best in the autumnal season. The Śaradvarṇana in Canto IV of *Raghuvaṁśa* is very short and Kovidāra is not mentioned there.

KARṆIKĀRA (Kaniyāra) —*Pterospermum Acerifolium* (Vasanta) : This tree is said to flower when a young woman dances before it.[49] Like some other trees which conspicuously figure in Sanskrit literature it is not as yet definitely identified. Its flowers appear to be fairly large-sized and of yellow colour and were widely used by women for decoration.[50] They are large enough to give shelter to a bee which craves for a cool refuge in the hottest part of summer.[51]

Kālidāsa has definitely stated that the flowers of this tree have no smell.[52] Beauty of form and a nice smell, the poet says, are not allowed to reside in one flower by the creator. The Karṇikāra flowers are in one place compared to the jets or flames of lamps owing to their shining yellow colour.[53]

DEVADĀRU (Pine)—*Pinus Deodara* : A tall beautiful tree found in large numbers round about the Himalayan heights. The juice which exudes from the young foliage of this tree has a fragrant smell.[54] Devadāru literally means "the divine tree" and its great height and majestic appear-

48. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 6.
49. विकसति च पुरोनर्तनात्कर्णिकारः ।
50. *Kumārasambhava* III. 53, 62.
51. *Vikramorvaśīya* II. 22.
52. *Kumārasambhava* III 28.
53. *Vikramorvaśiya* III. 3.
54. *Meghadūta* II. 44 :
भित्त्वा सद्यः किसलयपुटान्देवदारुद्रुमाणां ये तत्क्षीरस्रुतिसुरभयो दक्षिणेन प्रवृत्ताः ।

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ance fully justify the epithet. This tree is often referred to in Sanskrit literature.[55] It is said that the atmosphere of the Devadāru trees is beneficial for consumptive patients. There is oil in the wood of this tree, and therefore it is used for fuel.

SINDHUVĀRA (Nirguḍī)—*Vitex Nirgundo* : This plant is both a tree as well as a thicket. It has long clusters of blossoms containing pear-like small buds. Hence in *Kumārasambhava* Pārvatī is said to have made use of the Sindhuvāra flowers as a substitute for a string of pearls.[56]

SANTĀNAKA—Rhododendron : Santānaka has been mentioned by Kālidāsa as a heavenly tree. That this tree exists in plenty in the Himalayan forests is clear on account of many references to it in *Kumārasambhava*. This must be a tree of good appearance with comfortable shade having flowers which are used for auspicious occasions.[57]

KURABAKA (Korāṇṭī)—*Barleria Prionites* (Vasanta) : The flower of this tree has five petals which are somewhat joined together. When the flower fully opens up, its lower part has the appearance of a lip, hence it is called lip flower (ओष्ठपुष्प).[58] The filaments of the flower are nearer to its lowest part and appear like white teeth. Scientists have therefore given "दन्तद्युति" as its class name. The tree is reputed to flower on being embraced by a beautiful girl.[59] Its flowers appear to have some sort of attractive smell[60] and are said to create a yearning for the company of the opposite sex[61].

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55. *Kumārasambhava* I. 54; III. 44.
56. „ III. 53.
57. *Raghuvaṁśa* X. 77; *Kumārasambhava* VI. 46; VII. 3.
58. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 18.
59. तिलककुरबकौ वीक्षणालिङ्गनाभ्याम् ।
60. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 29 :
विरचिता मधुनोपवनश्रियामभिनवा इव पत्रविशेषकाः ।
मधुलिहां मधुदानविशारदाः कुरबका रवकारणतां ययुः ॥
61. *Mālavikāgnimitra* III. 9.

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MANDĀRA—Calatropis Gigantea: This is of the same species as Kāñcana which also is sometimes named Mandāra. Kovidāra is a tree of the same kind. Its flowers are very pretty, but delicate, and cannot last for a long time. Still they are mentioned as being used to adorn the hair of ladies.[62] Mandāra is also reputed to be a heavenly flower.[63]

These trees are said to exist on the bank of the heavenly Ganges.[64] This tree is known to put forth flowers when a young woman cracks a clever joke or utters a witty saying in its presence.

NAMERU (Surapunnāga or Rudrākṣa)—*Elaeocarpus Ganitras*: Rudrākṣa beads which the yogins and saints use in strings and count with the object of concentrating their minds on the Infinite are made of the wood of this tree. Its flowers are like Kadamba which grow about the knob-like ends of its branches and present the appearance somewhat of a pin-cushion. The soldiers of Raghu are mentioned to have rested under the shade of the Nameru trees when Raghu ascended the Himalayan range.[65]

In *Kumārasambhava* the गण are said to wear the flowers of the Nameru trees on their ears.[66] This tree is found in the Himalayan forests.

CANDANA—Santalum Album: This is a tree which grows mosty in southern India. Its wood is yellowish in colour and yields a fragrant paste which is used for religious, decorative, and cooling purposes.[67] Its wood was and is still used by rich people for cremating dead bodies of their relatives.[68] The tree puts forth small flowers which

62. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 63 :
मन्दारपुष्पैरधिवासितायां यस्याः शिखायामयमर्पणीयः ।
Meghadūta II. 9.
63. *Śākuntala* VII. 2.
64. *Meghadūta* II. 4.
65. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 74.
66. *Kumārasambhava* I. 55.
67. *Śṛṅgāratilaka* 7, 18; *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 6.
68. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 71.

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at first are of a yellowish colour and later on become rose-coloured. A species of this tree is called सितचन्दन to distinguish it from रक्तचन्दन which is an altogether different tree.

Raghu's elephants are mentioned as having been tied to the Candana trees in places where serpents had made grooves by habitually coiling themselves round their trunks[69], when the great king was campaigning in the southern part of India, so that even unruly elephants could not free themselves from their bondage.

Candana paste is cooling and comfortable in the summer season.

Candana tree is well-known as the favourite resting place of serpents who are attracted by its fragrance.[70]

The tree is the product of southern India along with the betel plant, the betelnut tree, the cardamom plant[71], and the Tamāla tree.

BHŪRJA—Betula Bhojapatra: This is a large tree found in the Himalayan tracts. Its bark was used in ancient times by Indians as a substitute for paper. It was called Bhūrjapatra, although it was really the bark of the tree. In *Kumārasambhava* the word भूर्जत्वक् has been rightly used. These barks are of reddish colour and hence they are compared to *padmas* or reddish spots appearing on the skin of an elephant at a certain age.[72]

PĀRIJĀTA—Nictanthus Arbor Tristis: There is a Paurāṇic legend that this tree was brought down to earth by Kṛṣṇa from heaven as a present to his favourite wife Satyabhāmā. Perhaps this tree was imported from abroad. In *Kumārasambhava* Pārijāta has been mentioned as a tree

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69. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 48 :
भोगिवेष्टनमार्गेषु चन्दनानां समर्पितम् ।
नाखसत्करिणां ग्रैवं त्रिपदीच्छेदिनामपि ॥

70. *Śākuntala* VII. 18.

71. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 64.

72. *Kumārasambhava* I. 7.

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belonging to the Nandanavana of Indra.[73] This is a small-sized tree having sweet-smelling small flowers of a white reddish colour. It is leafless in summer and puts forth foliage and a profusion of flowers during the monsoon. Its flowers bloom and diffuse their fragrance after night-fall.

It is to be noted that in *Ṛtusaṁhāra* where the poet carefully enumerates almost every flowering tree or plant peculiar to each season, Pārijāta is not mentioned. This tree ought to have found a place in the description of the monsoon season.

ŚAMĪ—Prosopis Spicigua : This is a tree which grows in wild tracts of India. Its wood was used by ancient Aryans for igniting fire by rubbing. Hence it was supposed that its wood was pregnant with fire.[74] The Khadira tree belongs to the same species.

AKṢOṬA (Akroḍa)—*Juglans Ragia* : Mention of this tree is made in Canto IV of *Raghuvaṁśa*. It is said that when Raghu attacked Kāmbhoja, a part of Afghanistan, the people there could not resist his onslaught and bent themselves before him (surrenderd to him) just as the Akṣoṭa trees to which his elephants were tied bent before their strength.[75] The flowers of this tree are very fragrant.

KĀLĀGURU—Aquilaria Agalocha : This tree is mentioned as existing in Assam (प्राग्ज्योतिष). It is said that the elephants of Raghu were tied to these trees which began to shake just as the king of Assam began to shake with fear on the approach of Raghu.[76] These trees are found in the Himalayas. The wood of these trees when burnt emits a kind of fragrance.

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73. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 6 : रराज धाम्ना रघुसूनुरेव कल्पद्रुमाणामिव पारिजातः ।
Kumārasambhava VIII. 27; XIII. 43.

74. *Śākuntala* IV. 3; *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 9.

75. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 69.

76. „ IV. 81.

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NAKTAMĀLA—Pongamia Glabra: This tree is mentioned to exist on the bank of the Narmadā river. Prince Aja on his way to Vidarbha had encamped his army in the shade of the Naktamāla trees on the banks of the Narmada.[77] The flowers of this tree bloom at night-time, and its name may be due to the above fact. It is also called करञ्ज, presumably because its flowers are of the size and shape of करंजी, a kind of Indian sweetmeat.

KHARJŪRĀ or *KHARJŪRĪ—Phoenix Dactylifera*: Kharjūrī is also mentioned as the tree to which Raghu's elephants were tied in his passage through the अपरान्त (Konkan). The bees were attracted to the rutting temples of the elephants leaving the Punnāga flowers.[78] As this description has reference to the Konkan tract, Kharjūrī must be taken to be the tree known as शिंदी, which belongs to the same species as Kharjūrī. In *Śākuntala* the word पिण्डखर्जूर is used.[79]

PUNNĀGA (उंडी)—*Calophyllum Inophyllum*: This is a tree mostly found in the Konkan. The flowers of this tree appear to have good smell as they are said to attract bees.[80]

MADHŪKA (मोहडा)—*Bassia Latifolia*: This tree belongs to the Bakula species. It has small white and fragrant flowers from which a kind of wine is prepared. A wreath of these flowers it was customary for the bride to wear. Indumatī had in her hand such a garland when she moved about in the Svayaṁvara pavilion to choose a fitting husband.[81] So also Pārvatī on the eve of her marriage is mentioned to have adorned her hair with a Madhūka garland.

PLAKṢA (पिंपळ)—*Ficus Religiosa*: This is a large wide-

77. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 42.
78. ,, IV. 57.
79. *Śākuntala* Act II, p. 70.
80. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 57.
81. ,, VI. 25; *Kumārasambhava* VII. 14.

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spreading tree considered sacred by the Indians. This tree has been pressed into service by Kālidāsa on two occasions. In Canto VIII of *Raghuvaṁśa* where Aja is said to have died of an incurable disease brought on by his incessant grief on account of his departed beloved wife, the poet compares the disease to a Plakṣa tree which when planted in the vicinity of a mansion gradually spreads its roots underneath and in course of time, breaking through the foundation, brings down the entire palatial structure. The simile indicates with remarkable vividness the insidious, treacherous and resistless action of the spreading strong roots of the Plakṣa tree.[82]

The second place where the tree is made to figure is in Canto XIII of *Raghuvaṁśa*. The old ministers of Rāma in their grief at his long sojourn abroad had grown their beards and the poet compares them to Plakṣa trees which, with their long voluminous tendrils hanging down, create the appearance of complete chaos.[83] It appears that in this simile the poet has confused the Vaṭa (the Banian tree) with the Plakṣa (the Pipal tree) as the latter does not throw down a profusion of tendrils like the Banian.

ASANA (अइन or असणा) —*Bridelia Retusa*: This tree is considered by some to be the same as Kakubha. In Canto IX of *Raghuvaṁśa* Daśaratha is said to have filled the mouths of tigers with his arrows.[84] The tigers who ran to attack him full of fury with their hair standing on end are compared to the full flowering Asana trees. This tree does not appear to be fully identified.

KŪṬAŚĀLMALI (काटेसावर) —*Bombax Malabaricum*: In Canto XII of *Raghuvaṁśa* in the description of the unique fight between Rāma and Rāvaṇa the latter is said to have thrown at the former a शतघ्नी (the killer of a hundred persons)—a weapon which the poet compares to

82. *Raghuvaṁśa* VIII. 93 :
तस्य प्रसह्य हृदयं किल शोकशङ्कुः प्लक्षप्ररोह इव सौधतलं विभेद ।
83. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 71.
84. ,, IX. 63.

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the trunk of the Kūṭaśālmali tree which is thickly studded with strong and sharp nail-like projections.[85] The Kūṭaśālmali appears to be a well-known weapon of the God of Death. In the present case the weapon शतघ्नी is compared to Kūṭaśālmali.

VAṬA—Ficus Bengalensis : This tree has a fabulously large expanse under the shade of which sometimes thousands of people can obtain shelter. This tree is also reputed to last for centuries and there are Vaṭa trees which are reputed to be more than a thousand years old. The secret of their long life is that they throw out far-off tendrils which in their turn take a firm root in the ground and start their own life under protection of the parent tree so that when in course of time the old trunk withers away, its place is taken up by the fresh offshoots, so much so, that the tree may be said to be almost deathless. It has small fruits of green colour which when they are ripe become reddish. They have the same appearance as figs and being somewhat sweet are much relished by birds. There is a reference to the revered श्यामवट[86] of hoary age in Canto XIII of *Raghuvaṁśa* and also in *Rāmāyaṇa*.

SARALA—Pinus Longifolia : The pines or Sarala trees are found in the Himalayas. When these trees happen to be crowded together their friction causes conflagrations in the forest.[87] The seeds of these trees are exposed to sight and therefore they are called नग्नबीज. These trees like Devadāru exude a kind of sap which has a nice smell.[88] The trunk of this tree has sometimes a circumference of more than twenty feet and a height straight up of fifty to sixty feet. The forests of these trees are well-known for their majestic scenic beauty.

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85. *Raghuvaṁśa* XII. 95.
86. „ XIII. 53.
87. *Meghadūta* I. 53.
88. *Kumārasambhava* I. 9 :

कपोलकण्डूः करिभिर्विनेतुं विघट्टितानां सरलद्रुमाणाम् ।
यत्र स्रुतक्षीरतया प्रसूतः सानूनि गन्धः सुरभीकरोति ॥

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KĪCAKA—Dandrocalamus Hamiltonii : This is a kind of giant grass. This is of two kinds. The thinner kind which is called "bamboo" and the thicker and stronger kind which is full of sharp nail-like points more numerous nearer the base. A thick cluster of these latter trees is therefore almost impenetrable. It is said that if a person is pursued by an infuriated elephant in the forest, he can save himself only by taking refuge in a thick cluster of the latter kind (वेळू Mar.) as the elephant is dreadfully afraid of the sharp points of these trees.

The breeze passing through these trees makes a tune-like sonorous sound in the solitude of the jungle.[89]

VAMŚA (Bamboo)—*Bambusa Arundinacea* : This is the thinner variety of Kīcaka. It is much used for constructing temporary sheds and of its fibre various useful articles are made.

RĀJATĀLĪ (Betel-nut: पोफळ)—*Areca Catechu* : Rājatālī may mean royal or beautiful Tāla tree and may therefore apply to the betel-nut tree which is plentiful in the Konkan tract. Reference to Rājatālī occurs in the description of the अपरान्त i.e. western coast where Konkan is situated. It is said that the sound produced by the metallic covering of the marching horses of Raghu's army overcame that made by the Rājatālī forest under the stress of a sharp breeze playing on it.[90] A large grove of betel-nut trees waving in the wind is one of the beautiful sights of the Konkan region.

NĀRIKELA (Cocoanut: नारळ)—*Cocos Nucifera*: This tree or its fruit is referred to in two places in Kālidāsa's works. On the occasion of Raghu's successful invasion of Kaliṅga (Coromandel coast) it is stated in Canto IV of

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89. *Kumārasambhava* I. 8; *Meghadūta* I. 56; *Raghuvaṁśa* II. 12.

90. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 56 :

अभ्यभूयत वाहानां चरतां गात्रशिक्षितैः ।
वर्मभिः पवनोद्धूतराजतालीवनध्वनिः ॥

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Raghuvaṁśa that his soldiers drank cocoanut juice liquor in receptacles or cups improvised from betel leaves, having prepared convenient booths for that purpose.[91]

The cocoanut tree is perhaps the most valuable plant in western and southern India. Its fruit the cocoanut is justly termed श्रीफल (the queen of fruits) or the auspicious fruit and is invariably used on festive and auspicious occasions. The white stuff inside the hard outer cover is sweet and juicy and is used in making numerous tasty edibles. The strong fibre of the uppermost soft cover of the fruit is fashioned into sturdy and durable ropes. Its wood is also useful for structural purposes. The sap of this tree is converted into a healthy and tasty alcoholic beverage which is much in demand in places where it is produced.

The outer hard cover of this fruit is fashioned into convenient receptacles and vessels by poor people.[92]

TAMĀLA—Garcinia Morella: A middle-sized tree whose black thick foliage affords pleasant shade and whose dense jungles are pleasing to the sight. Reference to this tree occurs in Canto XIII of *Raghuvaṁśa* when पुष्पकविमान is nearing Pañcavaṭī[93] and the southern part of India where the seashore is crowded with betel-nut trees bent with the weight of their fruit and darkened with Tamāla groves.[94]

JAMBŪ (जांभूळ)—*Engenia Jambolana*: This is a big tree, sometimes of great height. In Pūrvamegha Kālidāsa speaks of the forests of दशार्ण (either Chattisgad tract or Bhelsa region) as grown dark-blue on account of jungles of the Jambū trees overladen with ripe fruits.[95] Similarly Revā

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91. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 42.
92. *Śākuntala* Act IV, p. 127.
93. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 49.
94. „ XIII. 15.
95. *Meghadūta* I. 23 :
त्वय्यासन्ने परिणतफलश्यामजम्बूवनान्ताः
संपत्स्यन्ते कतिपयदिनस्थायिहंसा दशार्णाः ।

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river is mentioned as obstructed in her course by thickets of Jambū trees on the Vindhya mountain.[96] This means that the tree exists also in clusters or thickets. In *Vikramorvaśīya* Act IV the cuckoo is contemptuously referred to as voraciously eating the fruit of राजजम्बूद्रुम (a Jambū tree which produces exceptionally large and juicy fruit) utterly regardless of the polite request of the king for some information of his beloved.[97]

TĀLA (ताड)—*Borassus Flabellifer*: Tāla and Tālī (female tree) are palm trees. Rājatālīs are supposed to be betel-nut trees so called owing to their beautiful appearance. The Tāla has ball-shaped fruits with eatable kernel and sweet liquid inside. The sap of this tree is made into a good wine (ताडी Mar.). The fruits when ripe are of yellow colour, hence a collection of these trees full of ripe fruits, may create an illusion that they are made of gold. Hence in *Meghadūta* it is said that the king Pradyota owned a forest of golden palm trees.[98]

When the demon Lavaṇa attacked Śatrughna with his right hand upraised he is said to have appeared like a moving mountain having a single palm tree at the top.[99]

These trees are found in plenty in tracts bordering the sea.[100]

UDUMBARA (उंबर) —*Ficus Glomerata*: These trees are found in all parts of India. They are of wild growth. By means of their specialized cultivation, the fig tree has been produced. Their fruit season is the monsoon time when the cold winds surcharged with moisture bring their fruit to maturity.[101]

LAVALĪ (रायआवळी)—*Phyllanthus Distichus*: The pallor appearing on the face of a pregnant woman is compared to

96. *Meghadūta* I. 20.
97. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 27.
98. *Meghadūta* I. 26.
99. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 23.
100. „ IV. 34.
101. *Meghadūta* I. 42.

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the colour of the leaves of this tree.[102] This tree is usually planted in gardens. In Apte's dictionary Lavalī is stated to be a creeper. Rāma in *Uttararāmacarita* compares Sītā's hand to a new shoot or sprout of the Lavalī plant.[103]

LODHRA—Symplocos Racemosa (Hemanta) : A forest tree with yellow, red or white bell-like flowers. The pollen of this tree is used as a face powder.[104] The tree blossoms up in the Hemanta season (Mārgaśīrṣa and Pauṣa) i.e. December and January.[105] When the tree is in full bloom it has an imposing appearance.[106] It is said that the exudation of this tree when applied has a cleansing effect on the skin.[107]

PAṄKACCHID (निर्मळी वृक्ष) —*Stryehnos Potatorum*: The fruit of this tree when slightly crushed and thrown in turbid water is reputed to make it pure and clean.[108] The tree is about forty to fifty feet in height. Its flowers are about three inches in length and about one inch in breadth.

ŚIRĪṢA—Mimosa Speciosa (Summer) : This is a fairly large tree having delicate greenish flowers. Its flower finds numerous references in the poet's writings and it appears to be one of his favourites. The tree flowers in the hot season, and is therefore mentioned in the description of the निदाघ (summer) in *Raghuvaṁśa*.[109] Its flower is mentioned as the favourite ear-ornament of young women in the hot season.[110]

The colour of the flowers approximates to that of the moss (शैवाल); the fishes in the Śarayū river were therefore

102. *Vikramorvaśīya* V. 8.
103. *Uttararāmacarita* III. 41.
104. *Meghadūta* II. 2.
105. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* IV. 1.
106. *Raghuvaṁśa* II. 29.
107. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 17.
108. *Mālavikāgnimitra* II. 7.
109. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 48 :
च्युतं न कर्णादपि कामिनीनां शिरीषपुष्पं सहसा पपात ।
110. *Śākuntala* I. 4.

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deceived when they saw these flowers being dropped down from the ears of the ladies of king Kuśa's harem, and mistook them for शवाल (moss).[111]

This flower appears to be delicate and nice.[112] It appears therefore to have been much used as an ear-ornament.[113]

TINTIṆĪ (चिंच) —*Tamarindus Indica*: This is a fairly big tree. The fruit is about twelve inches long containing soft pulpy matter and hard bean-like black seeds. This fruit has sour taste and is used as a sauce in edibles.[114]

TAMBŪLĪ—Piper Betel: This tree produces betel leaves which are so much in demand in India for chewing purposes.[115] It is said that the juice of this leaf has medicinal properties and aids digestion. It has also a slightly intoxicating effect. It is called नागवेल as it climbs zigzag like a snake.

PŪGA (पोफळ) —*Areca Catechu*: This tree yields the betel-nut which is chewed along with the betel leaves. This fruit is much in demand in India for the above reason. The tree is plentiful in southern and western India especially on the coast line.[116] Large conglomeration of these trees, with playful breeze singing and sighing in their midst, presents a very pleasant and soothing prospect.

SMALL PLANTS, BUSHES, CREEPERS, FUNGUS ETC.

NAVAMALLIKĀ (मोगरी) —*Jasminum Arborescens* (Vasanta): This small plant exists singly or in bushes. Its flowers are white and very fragrant. Its flower blooms after evening and fills the air with its sweet intoxicating smell.

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111. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 61.
112. *Kumārasambhava* I. 41.
113. *Meghadūta* II. 2 : चूडापाशे नवकुरवकं चारु कर्णे शिरीषम्।
Śākuntala I. 26; VI. 18.
114. „ Act II, p. 70.
115. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 42.
116. „ IV. 44.

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A variety of this plant has bigger flowers and is therefore called वटमोगरी (Mar.). Its flowering season is spring-time. This creeper is considered very delicate and easily susceptible to harm.[117] It is considered the natural and suitable mate of the mango tree.[118] Its flower is a great favourite with young women[119] and is very dear to the bees.[120]

ATIMUKTALATĀ (कुसर) —*Jasminum Latifolium* (Vasanta)—Belongs to the same genus as Navamallikā. Its leaves are single and stand apart from each other. Its flowers are reddish white and somewhat elongated and have an attractive smell. Both Navamallikā and Atimuktalatā are reputed to attach themselves to the mango tree.[121] This flower is also well-known as exciting amorous passion.[122]

KUNDA—Jasminum Pubescens (Vasanta): Belongs to the same genus as Yūthikā (जाईजुई). The petals of its flower are, however, broader than those of the Yūthikā flower. The young buds of this plant being shining white and somewhat elongated and pointed at the end, are compared to beautiful teeth.[123]

PRIYAṄGU—Aglaia Roxburghiana (Hemanta) : The plant exists in the form of a thicket and bears yellow flowers whose petals stand apart. The flowers are small, well-shaped and fragrant. This plant flowers in the cold season.[124] The normal colour of this plant is bluish dark.[125]

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117. *Śākuntala* Act IV, p. 121.
118. „ Act I, p. 31.
119. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 5.
120. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 47 :
वनेषु सायंतनमल्लिकानां विजृम्भणोद्गन्धिषु कुड्मलेषु ।
प्रत्येकनिक्षिप्तपदः सशब्दं संख्यामिवैषां भ्रमरश्चकार ॥
121. *Mālavikāgnimitra* IV. 13.
122. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 17.
123. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 23; *Śṛṅgāratilaka* 3.
124. „ IV. 10.
125. *Mālatīmādhava* III. 9.

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ŚĀLI (साळी) (Hemanta and Śiśira) : Corn or rice plant which becomes ripe for harvest in autumn or the beginning of winter. This is the wealth of the cold season as the fields are yellow-coloured and waving with ripe corn and the rustic villagers are full of joy and hope.[126]

KALAMA (कोळंबा) —*Oryza Sativa*: This is a kind of rice. This is sown in one place and the offshoots when they rise about a foot from the ground are pulled out and planted elsewhere. The reason is that if they are allowed to grow to their full height in the place where they are first planted they will prove sterile and unproductive.[127]

BANDHŪKA (दुपारी) —*Pentapetes Phoenicea* (Śarad) : This is a thorny shrub with red flowers, an ephemeral plant which rises out of the ground on the advent of the rainy season and dies soon after the cessation of the rains. This plant, however, is referred to in *Ṛtusaṁhāra* in the description of autumn (Śarad).[128]

KĀŚA (काशा) —*Saccharum Cylindricum* (Śarad): This is a kind of grass of the same kind as sugarcane which springs up in deep black soil. Its flowers are white. In his description of Śarad (autumn) the poet enumerates all white things characteristic of that season including the Kāśa.[129] This grass owing to its rough fibre lasts throughout the year.

MĀLATĪ—*Aganosma Caryophyllata* (Śarad and Varṣā): This is a creeper with white flowers whose efflorescence occurs in the autumnal season. This creeper is also mentioned in the rainy season.[130]

126. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* IV. 1, 18; V. 16.
127. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 37 :
आपादपद्मप्रणताः कलमा इव ते रघुम् ।
फलैः संवर्धयामासुरुत्खातप्रतिरोपिताः ॥
Ṛtusaṁhāra III. 5.
128. „ III. 5.
129. „ III. 2.
130. „ II. 24; *Meghadūta* II. 35.

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KAṄKELI— Caesalpinia Pulcherima (Śarad): This tree has flowers of red colour as also of yellow colour. It has an attractive appearance.[131]

KALHĀRA—Nymphea Stellata: This is a species of red lotus. It opens up at the rise of the sun.[132]

PUṆḌARĪKA: This is a kind of lotus which is white in colour. On account of its white colour it is compared to a white royal umbrella.[133]

PADMA—Nelumbium Speciosum: This is a kind of lotus of red colour which can be differentiated from other kinds in that its leaves and flower stand above the water sometimes up to the height of three or four feet while the other kinds float on the surface of the water. When Pārvatī was practising penance, she stood submerged in ice-cold water in winter upto her neck, so that only her face was visible over the water level. The poet compares her face to the full-blown Padma lotus, emerging above the water level—the only one of its kind when all the other lotuses were destroyed by the fall of snow.[134] The ruby is called Padmarāga as its colour is red like that of a Padma.[135] In the description of Grīṣma in Canto XVI of *Raghuvaṁśa* the stalks of the Padmas in the private tanks (दीर्घिका) whose water had gradually dried up owing to the extreme heat of summer are described as standing aloft clean above the water level.[136]

ARAVINDA: This is a kind of red lotus which opens out to the sun's rays. Although Sunandā praised the king

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131. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 18.
132. „ III. 15.
133. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 17.
134. *Kumārasambhava* V. 27 :
मुखेन सा पद्मसुगन्धिना निशि प्रवेपमानाधरपत्रशोभिना ।
तुषारवृष्टिक्षतपद्मसंपदां सरोजसंधानमिवाकरोदपाम् ॥
135. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 53.
136. „ XVI. 46.

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of Vidarbha, Indumatī was impervious and irresponsive, because she was like an Aravinda which never opens up to the rays of the moon (her sun being Aja).[137] It will be remembered that Aravinda is one of the arrows of the God of Love.

KUVALAYA: This is the blue lotus which blooms in the rays of the moon.

KUMUDA: These lotuses present four different colours, viz., yellow, red, blue and white.[138]

Lotuses are said to open to the rays of the sun and the moon for the purpose of absorbing their light or for the convenience of the insects who feed on their pollen.

ŚEPHĀLIKĀ—Jasminum Officinale: "The sweet fragrance of the Śephālikā flowers, the resonant notes of birds resting at ease, the fascinating eyes of the female deer leisurely roaming—embellished with these, the gardens inflame the male minds with passion," says the poet.[139] This creeper belongs to the same class Yūthikā (जाईजुई). Its flowers have from five to ten petals whose colour is bluish red.

BHADRAMUSTA (मोथा) *—Cyperus Scariobus*: A grass-like plant growing in wet places or shallow water, much relished by wild boars.[140] In *Raghuvaṁśa* Daśaratha is mentioned as tracking the boars to their hiding places by means of bits of the मुस्ता grass with which the ground which they traversed was strewn.[141]

ŚYĀMĀ (कृष्णशारिया) *—Ichnocarpus . Frutescens*: The flowers of this plant are of bluish colour. This creeper does not spread itself out, but its tendrils entwine themselves into a close thicket. Poets compare the colour of

137. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 66.
138. *Śākuntala* V. 28.
139. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 14.
140. *Śākuntala* II. 6.
141. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 59.

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the body of a beautiful young woman to a Śyāmā creeper.[142] It is however difficult to understand why this particular creeper has been selected as the standard for such comparison.

IKṢU (ऊस) —*Saccharum Officinarum*: The sugarcane plant. This plant becomes ripe for use in the cold season (Śiśira).[143] In this season, it is said, people enjoy a variety of sweetmeats made of raw sugar. This plant has joints about a foot distant from one another on which it can be easily broken. In Act VII of *Śākuntala,* Vidūṣaka despondently cries out that he was being broken to pieces like a sugarcane stick on its joints by some invisible spirit.[144]

KADALĪ (केळ) —*Musa Sapienteam*: This is a tree very common in India. It yields a luscious and nutritious fruit which varies in length from three to six inches and is much in demand. Its leaves are very large about four to five feet in length and three feet in breadth. Its trunk is like a column smooth and glossy and varies in height from six feet to ten feet. Its fruits appear in a large cluster sometimes containing about more than 150 plantains.

The thighs of a beautiful woman are compared to the trunk of this tree.[145] रम्भोरु, therefore, is a complimentary term for a beautiful woman, Rambhā being the name of an unusually beautiful variety of this tree. In *Kumārasambhava* the poet remarks that although this special kind of tree has a beautiful rounded trunk yet it being unpleasantly cold to the touch it could not be compared with Pārvatī's thighs which were not only very beautiful but also pleasantly warm. This is a well-known illustration of व्यतिरेकालङ्कार where the उपमान (the standard of comparison) is cried down

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142. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 18; *Meghadūta* II. 41.

143. „ V. 1, 16.

144. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 224.

145. *Meghaduta* II. 33 : यास्यत्यूरुः सरसकदलीस्तम्भगौरश्रलत्वम् ।
Raghuvaṁśa VI. 35.

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as being inferior to the उपमेय (the object of comparison).[146] The peculiarity of this plant is that after yielding fruit only once it becomes barren and has to be cut down, but from the remaining trunk a fresh offshoot springs up and grows into another fruit-bearing tree.

KANDALĪ (चवई or चवण) —*Musa Superba*: This is a small plant having all the main features of a Kadalī. It rises above the ground after it is soaked with rain water on the commencement of the monsoon[147] and dies away at the end of the season, leaving however its bulbous roots in the ground to send forth offshoots next year. Another name for this plant is Śilīndra. The plant puts forth red flowers. In *Vikramorvaśīya* its red flowers with rain water inside them are compared to the eyes of Urvaśī red with anger and brimming with unshed tears.[148]

KETAKA & KETAKĪ—Pandanus Odoratissimus: This is a kind of shrub whose flowers are of the shape of a bunch of long leaves with a very fragrant smell. Ketaka is the male plant and Ketakī is the female. The male flower has a much better smell. In *Meghadūta* in the description of the Varṣā season, the hedges are said to have grown whitish owing to full-blown *Ketakas*.[149]

KUṬAJA (कुडा) —*Holarrhena Antidysenterica*: This is a plant which flowers during the rainy season.[150] Its flowers are white. It was with the offering of the fresh flowers of this tree that the Yakṣa in *Meghadūta* is mentioned to have greeted the cloud appearing in the sky to mark the inset of the monsoon.

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146. *Kumārasambhava* I. 36.

147. *Meghadūta* I. 11, 21.

148. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 15.

149. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* II. 17; *Meghadūta* I. 23; *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 16.

150. „ III. 13; *Meghadūta* I. 4.

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KUSUMBHA (करडई) —*Carthamus Tinctorius*: The flower of this tree is used for preparing red colour.[151]

NICULA—Calamus Rotang, VĀNĪRA—Calamus Tenuis, VETASA—Calamus Viminalis: These are all species of cane. These mostly grow in watery places near the banks of rivers or lakes. Scientists classify the red reeds and canes with palm-trees. In *Meghadūta* the Rāmagiri tract is said to be full of Niculas[152] and the banks of the Gambhīrā river to be full of Vānīras.[153] The trunk of the Vānīra plant is somewhat like that of a sugarcane but it is much tougher and durable. This plant was used for improvising temporary tenements (sheds) for residence and sport.[154] Sometimes their growth on the river side is so thick that the waters of the river are almost invisible. It was on this account that Daśaratha happened to kill the son of an ascetic on the banks of the Tamasā river as the latter was completely screened from view.[155] The water of a river reaching right up to the fringe of such reeds on its banks is compared to the outskirts of her garment.

JAPĀ (जास्वंदी)—*Hibiscus Rosasinensis*: This is a plant producing generally red flowers. This is a garden plant. There are many varieties of this plant reared by special cultivation.

The poet has compared the flaming red colour of the evening sky to that of the flower of this plant.[156]

STHALAKAMALA—Colchicum Luteum: There is a reference to this plant in *Uttaramegha*.[157] The Yakṣa says, "Oh cloud! the eyes of my wife brimming with tears and

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151. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 4.

152. *Meghadūta* I. 14.

153. „ I. 41.

154. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 21; *Śākuntala* III. 23.

155. „ IX. 75.

156. *Meghadūta* I. 36.

157. „ II. 27.

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half-closed on account of grief will appear like the स्थलकमल (land lotus) on a cloudy day (neither closed nor open)." The plant is not yet definitely identified. The colour of its flower to suit the above mentioned reference must necessarily be whitish red.

YŪTHIKĀ (जाईजुई)—*Jasminum Grandiflorum, Jasminum Auriculatum*: The creepers bloom in the evening and the flowers fade and drop down in the morning. These are usually garden creepers. In a wild state they probably grow on the banks of rivers.[158]

BIMBA (तोंडले)—*Cephalandra Indica*: The fruit of these plants when ripe is glowing red and therefore it is compared to the red lips of a young beautiful woman.[159]

SALLAKĪ (सालई)—*Boswellia Serrata*: This is a tree whose tender branches are much relished by elephants.[160]

BĪJAPŪRAKA (महालुंग)—*Citrus Medica*: This belongs to the class of संत्री, मोसंबी. It is not very juicy and its juice is sour. This is a garden plant. It is referred to as an appropriate present when on a visit to important persons such as royalties.[161]

PIṆḌAKHARJŪRA—*Phoenix Sylvestris*: the fruit of the date tree which is round and extra sweet.[162]

UŚĪRA (वाळा)—*Andropogon Muricatus*: This is a kind of fragrant grass. Soaked in water it has a cooling effect if applied to the body.[163] Fans in India are made of the Uśīra grass.

IṄGUDĪ (हिंगण)—*Balanitis Roxburghii*: This is a thorny shrub which grows in wild tracts. Its fruit is medi-

158. *Meghadūta* I. 26.
159. „ II. 19.
160. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 44.
161. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act III, p. 35.
162. *Śākuntala* Act II, p. 70.
163. „ III. 6.

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cinal, and the oil extracted therefrom is used in the case of small wounds for its healing effects.[164] Hermits use it for oiling their matted hair.[165]

ŚYĀMĀKA (सावा)—*Pancum Miliare*: This is an inferior kind of corn.[166]

HARICANDANA: A kind of yellow sandalwood (Apte's dictionary).[167]

BARHIS (कुश)—*Poa Cynosuroides*: A kind of grass. Mallinātha in his commentary says that Barhis is Kuśa grass.[168]

KANDALA (कर्दळ)—*Canna Indica*: The colour of the flowers of this plant is reddish.[169]

PHALINĪ: The same as Priyaṅgulatā. It seems this plant bears fruits whose colour is shining yellow.[170]

MĀRĪCA (मिरी)—*Piper Nigrum*: This is called मिरवेल (Mar.) and is of the same species as Tāmbūlī (पानवेल). The appearance of both is almost the same. Its berries are black when immature and become white after ripening. The powder of the ripe fruit which is hot and pungent to the taste is extensively used as a condiment in certain articles of food. The pigeons are said to roam about among the मारीच creepers on the Malaya mountain in Canto IV of *Raghuvaṁśa*.[171]

ELĀ (वेलदोडा Mar.)—*Elettaria Cardamomum*: This is a creeper-like plant which mostly clings to the ground. It has large leaves. The seed-capsule is fragrant and has good taste and if mixed up with edibles gives the article a good taste and smell. The smell of this seed-capsule is likened to

164. *Śākuntala* IV. 13.
165. „ I. 13.
166. „ IV. 13.
167. „ VII. 2.
168. *Kumārasambhava* I. 60.
169. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 29.
170. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 61.
171. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 46.

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the ruttings of an elephant.[172]

DRĀKṢĀ (Grapes)—*Vitis Vinifera*: This is a famous creeper which yields very sweet and tasty fruit. Excellent wine is made of the juice of these fruits in many parts of the world. It is planted on large areas and is supported on raised bowers mostly made of bamboos. The soldiers of Raghu are mentioned to have enjoyed in Persia a carouse under the shade of grape bowers, sitting on superfine deer-skins.[173]

KUṄKUMA or *KEŚARA* (Saffron)—*Crocus Sativus*: This is the famous saffron plant whose home is chiefly in Kashmir. The paste of the filaments of this plant is often applied to the forehead as a decorative or caste mark. The female filaments of this plant are used as saffron. The Sindhu mentioned in the verse given below is supposed by Mallinātha to be a river in Kashmir.[174] Most of the readings of this verse, however, refer to Vaṅku, a river in Bactria where some kind of saffron is also produced.

JVALADAUṢADHI: In *Kumārasambhava* and *Raghuvaṁśa* certain plants giving light during night-time are mentioned. They are said to be oilless lamps which serve the foresters engaged in amorous sports.[175] In another place Pārvatī is mentioned as getting proficient in all lores and sciences which she had mastered in her previous birth as spontaneously as at night-time certain plants are endowed with light.[176]

Abhisārikās, wanton or pleasure-loving girls running after their lovers, it is said, easily find their way at night by the aid of these luminous plants.[177] Daśaratha while on a hunting expedition spent his nights in the forest lighted

172. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 47.
173. „ IV. 65.
174. „ IV. 67.
175. *Kumārasambhava* I. 10.
176. „ I. 30.
177. „ VI. 43.

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by plants effulgent with inherent lustre.[178]

Are there any plants endowed with inherent luminous or lighting quality? It may be a mere illusory phosphorescent effect which is observable from a distance and vanishes on near approach or it may be that the wood of certain trees is very oily and keeps on automatically burning for a long time thus supplying light and heat.

In certain tracts of the Konkan near the sea-shore, the people at a distance see a sort of conflagration at night time which vanishes when they approach too near to the place. This gives rise to a superstitious belief that during certain hours of the night the ghosts and spirits hold their revels and supply the necessary light by their miraculous power. These luminous plants are said to exist chiefly in the Himalayan regions. Soldiers on duty in Assam also speak of such evanescent lights in the jungle which can be seen from afar.

ŚILĪNDHRĀ : The same as Kandalī.[179]

ŚAIVĀLA (शेवाळ)—*Moss* : A green vegetable growth which appears on stagnant water and sometimes forms into a thick layer.[180]

Here ends the description of the vegetable life referred to in Kālidāsa's works. The great poet is essentially a bard of Nature and it will be generally found that the facts about plant life mentioned by him are wonderfully accurate. Nature mainly consists of men and other animals and plants. No epic poem, which in part must deal with Nature and its varied manifestations, can be complete without descriptions of the abovementioned ingredients of which it is composite. From this point of view, *Raghuvaṁśa, Kumārasambhava, Ṛtusaṁhāra* and *Meghadūta* are unique

178. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 70.

179. *Meghadūta* I. 11.

180. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 46; XVI. 61; *Śākuntala* I. 17.

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instances where Nature in its various aspects and moods has been accorded its proper place by the poet. It is however difficult to identify some of the plants and trees which find reference in the works of Ķālidāsa.

But this does not derogate from the beauty, grandeur and accuracy of the descriptions which mark out our poet as a close student and ardent lover of Nature.

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CHAPTER XIX

FAUNA OR BEAST LIFE

Among ancient Indians, the link of sympathy between man and beasts (as in the case of plants) was vital and intimate. *Bhagavadgītā* when declaring the impartial and equal regard of a really erudite person toward creatures of widely varying grades, enumerates them as follows: "A truly enlightened person, looks with equal regard on an erudite Brahmin, a bull, an elephant, a dog and a Cāṇḍāla."[1] Impliedly the verse recognizes the common bond of brotherhood between man and beast.

And this was far from being a mere pretence or a stunt as some of the beasts were raised almost to the level of divinity. We shall now proceed to enumerate the various animals who figure in Kālidāsa's writing.

BEASTS

COW : *Raghuvaṁśa* begins by extolling and emphasizing the divine eminence of the cow. Vasiṣṭha's cow Nandinī is the offspring of the divine cow of Indra (Surabhi) to whom the king Dilīpa inadvertently gave offence by omitting to do her obeisance when returning to earth after a visit to Indra. She thereupon cursed him that he would not beget a son unless he appeased her or her offspring by devoted service. In the second canto of *Raghuvaṁśa* Nandinī whom the king was serving according to the instructions of his preceptor (Vasiṣṭha), with a view to put to test his devotion to her, creates the illusion of herself being attacked by a ferocious lion and when satisfied with

1. *Bhagavadgītā* V. 18 : विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥

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his high-souled devotion and staunch loyalty blesses him with the boon of a valiant and virtuous son. The sparkling and cleverly argued dialogue between the fictitious lion and the king is one of the highlights of poetical craftsmanship in Sanskrit literature.

In the third canto, when Indra, forgetting his duty as the protector of Yajñas (sacrificial celebrations) and goaded by jealousy in view of the hundredth sacrifice which Dilīpa was performing, tried to lift away the sacrificial horse to prevent the completion of the Yajña, it was the application to the eyes of the watery discharge from Nandinī's body (who suddenly appeared on the scene to save Raghu from a difficult situation) that gave Raghu a second sight and enabled him to teach a sharp lesson to Indra for his unworthy conduct.

The veneration of the cow who is considered to be the mother of mankind owing to the supply of her precious milk is reflected to some extent on the bullock who is a necessary aid to agriculture in India. In *Kumārasambhava* Śiva's bull occupies a conspicuous and honoured place. A realistic description (स्वभावोक्ति) of Nandin (Śiva's mount) appears in *Kumārasambhava* I. 56. In VII. 37 he is fancied as the mount Kailāsa himself, who owing to his devotion to his divine master had assumed the small form of a white bull for his convenience.

It may be incidentally remarked that the she-buffalo which now supplies a very large proportion of milk to the people finds no reference in the works of Kālidāsa. Wild buffaloes are mentioned in *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 61. It appears that the highly nutritious milk of this useful animal was not much known in those days.

ELEPHANT (गज): This is an animal of huge bulk and great strength found in certain parts of India. The important part the animal used to play in warfare in ancient India is dealt with in Chapter XXI. He was moreover an indispensable emblem of royalty and great wealth. The term गजान्तलक्ष्मी indicated the extreme limit of opulence in those days. On great state functions and ceremonial occa-

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sions the elephant was used by kings and princes as a majestic and imposing mount. The prince Aja when proceeding from the Svayaṁvara pavilion to the palace of his royal father-in-law is stated to have mounted a she-elephant (*kareṇukā*).[2]

Honoured guests are made to mount on elephants. The monkey generals having been dressed up in a civilized way were made to mount rutting elephants by Rāma, so that they imagined themselves on their familiar mountains full of gushing springs.[3] The infant prince Sudarśana is mentioned as having been taken out on an elephant for a ride along public highways so that his subjects should see him and make obeisance to him.[4]

In royal marriage processions, the relations of the bride and bridegroom were seated on elephants. The relations of Himālaya went forward to receive the bridegroom Śaṅkara, mounted on long lines of elephants.[5]

The lions are said to be the avowed and traditional enemies of elephants whom they kill by breaking asunder their temples. Daśaratha is therefore said to have killed the lions with the intention of repaying his debt to the elephants for helping him in his wars with his enemies.[6]

Among the elephants there is a superfine species which is called गन्धगज. Even the mere smell of the ruttings of

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2. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 17 :
ततोऽवतीर्याशु करेणुकायाः स कामरूपेश्वरदत्तहस्तः (विवेश चतुष्कमन्तः)।

3. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 74 :
रामाज्ञया हरिचमूपतयस्तदानीं कृत्वा मनुष्यवपुरारुरुहुर्गजेन्द्रान्।
तेषु क्षरत्सु बहुधा मदवारिधाराः शैलाधिरोहणसुखान्युपलेभिरे ते॥

4. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVIII. 39 :
तं राजवीथ्यामधिहस्ति यान्तमाधोरणालम्बितमभ्यवेशं (पौराः प्रैक्षन्त)।

5. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 52 :
तमृद्धिमद्बन्धुजनाधिरूढैर्वृन्दैर्गजानां गिरिचक्रवर्ती (प्रत्युज्जगाम)।

6. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 65 :
तान्हत्वा गजकुलबद्धतीव्रवैरान्काकुत्स्थः कुटिलनखाग्रलग्नमुक्तान्।
आत्मानं रणकृतकर्मणां गजानामानृण्यं गतमिव मार्गणैरमंस्त॥

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this elephant is enough to scare away the ordinary members of his tribe.[7]

The elephant appears to be specially fond of the leaves of the Śallakī tree.[8] The elephant is supposed to be very kind and courteous to his or her mate.[9] He is fond of baths and dives in rivers and lakes[10]; he is also fond of digging up earth with his powerful tusks on the flanks of mountains. This latter is known as वप्रक्रीडा (the sport of digging up earth).[11] While engaged in this diversion he bends down his forelegs and inclines downwards in an oblique manner with a view to make the action of his tusks on the bulging part of the mountain surface more effective.

It is usual to paint and decorate the bodies of elephants with floral and other designs of various kinds.[12] Like the snakes, the elephants were reputed to hold jewels in their temples. The poet has achieved a beautiful metaphor when he remarks in *Kumārasambhava* XVI. 22 that the pearls dropping down from the cleft temples of elephants in the fight between Tāraka and the gods were as it were the seeds sown to yield a rich harvest of fame to the warriors engaged in the battle.[13]

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7. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 48 :
सप्तच्छदक्षीरकटुप्रवाहमसह्यमाघ्राय मदं तदीयम् ।
विलङ्घिताधोरणतीव्रयत्नाः सेनागजेन्द्रा विमुखा बभूवुः ॥
Vikramorvaśīya V. 18 : शमयति गजानन्यान्गन्धद्विपः कलभोऽपि सन् ।
8. „ IV. 44 : इयमभिलषतु तावदासवसुरभिरसं शल्लकीभङ्गम् ।
9. *Kumārasambhava* III. 37 : ददौ रसात्पङ्कजरेणुगन्धि गजाय गण्डूषजलं करेणुः ।
10. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 46 : पूर्वं तदुत्पीडितवारिराशिः सरित्प्रवाहस्तटमुत्ससर्प ।
11. *Meghadūta* I. 2 : वप्रक्रीडापरिणतगजप्रेक्षणीयं ददर्श ।
12. „ I. 19 :
रेवां द्रक्ष्यस्युपलविषमे विन्ध्यपादे विशीर्णां
भक्तिच्छेदैरिव विरचितां भूतिमङ्गे गजस्य ।
13. *Kumārasambhava* XVI. 22 :
शस्त्रभिन्नेभकुम्भेभ्यो मौक्तिकानि च्युतान्यधः ।
अध्याहवक्षेत्रमुप्तकीर्तिबीजाङ्कुरश्रियम् ॥

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DEER (हरिण) : This beautiful and lovable animal figures greatly in the descriptions of the आश्रमs (hermitages). It is affectionate and inoffensive and lives on grass and leaves of certain plants.[14] It is treated with almost filial affection by the hermits.[15] Śakuntalā's kindness and solicitude for the well-being of the motherless deer-cub among other brilliant touches enhances the supreme beauty of her character portraiture in Act IV of *Śākuntala*.[16] The saints and sages of the hermitage were so much attached to these animals that in the opening scene of *Śākuntala* a hermit is seen intercepting his body between the arrow of Duṣyanta and the running deer.[17] These animals were seen crowding the front portion of the huts of the Āśramas at all times, especially at eventide, chewing their cud in peace.[18] They roamed at their pleasure in the hermitage ground without the least fear of harm, though in the jungle the animal is extremely wary and vigilant and on the least sign of danger scampers away with almost lightning speed. The description of the deer running away to save itself from the deadly arrow of king Duṣyanta is very vivid and picturesque.[19] In Sanskrit literature the antelopes (deer) figure conspicuously owing to the beautiful shape and

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14. *Śākuntala* I. 7 : दर्भैरर्धावलीढैः श्रमविवृतमुखभ्रंशिभिः कीर्णवर्त्मा ।

15. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 7 :
क्रियानिमित्तेष्वपि वत्सलत्वादभग्नकामा मुनिभिः कुशेषु ।
तदङ्कशय्याच्युतनाभिनाला कच्चिन्मृगीणामनघा प्रसूतिः ॥

16. *Śākuntala* IV. 13 :
यस्य त्वया व्रणविरोपणमिङ्गुदीनां तैलं न्यषिच्यत मुखे कुशसूचिविद्धे ।

17. *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 20 :
अस्य खलु ते बाणपातवर्तिनः कृष्णसारस्यान्तरे तपस्विन उपस्थिताः ।

18. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 52 :
आतपात्ययसंक्षिप्तनीवारासु निषादिभिः ।
मृगैर्वर्तितरोमन्थमुटजाङ्गनभूमिषु ॥

19. *Śākuntala* I. 7 : ग्रीवाभङ्गाभिरामं मुहुरनुपतति स्यन्दने बद्धदृष्टिः ।

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quick movements of their eyes.[20] Pārvatī through playful curiosity measured the eyes of her friends with those of the deer in her hermitage.[21]

In Canto IX of *Raghuvaṁśa,* Daśaratha when on a hunting expedition had like Duṣyanta to give up the attempt at hunting deer in the forest on account of their beautiful eyes which reminded him of those of the pet ladies in his seraglio.[22]

मृगशृङ्ग was one of the paraphernalia of the यजमान performing a sacrifice as it was used for scratching the body, it having been forbidden at that time to use nails for the purpose.[23] मृगाजिन, i.e. the skin of a deer, was used as a seat by the hermits and *yogins,* also to cover the upper portion of their bodies.[24]

HORSE (अश्व) : In Chapter XXI reference is made to the use of the horse in warfare. Horses were yoked to the chariots and such other vehicles. The wonderful speed of the horses yoked to the chariot of king Duṣyanta is graphically described in *Śākuntala* I. 8-9. The horse was also used for riding by hunters.[25]

The horse has always been reputed for his love and loyalty to his master. The poet has referred to a faithful and loving horse who stood in the midst of the raging battle by the side of his master's dead body with tears flowing

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20. *Śākuntala* I. 23 :
अत्यन्तमेव मदिरेक्षणवल्लभाभिराहो निवत्स्यति समं हरिणाङ्गनाभिः ।
Śākuntala II. 3 : सहवसतिमुपेत्य यैः प्रियायाः कृत इव मुग्धविलोकितोपदेशः ।

21. *Kumārasambhava* V. 15 :
यथा तदीयैर्नयनैः कुतूहलात्पुरः सखीनाममिमीत लोचने ।

22. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 58 :
त्रासातिमात्रचटुलैः स्मरतः सुनेत्रैः प्रौढप्रियानयनविभ्रमचेष्टितानि ।

23. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 21 : मृगशृङ्गपरिग्रहाम् ।

24. *Kumārasambhava* III. 46 : कृष्णत्वचं ग्रन्थिमतीं दधानम् ।

25. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 50-51.
IX. 72 : श्रमफेनमुचा तपस्विगाढां तमसां प्राप नदीं तुरङ्गमेण ।

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from his eyes.[26] Horses of good breed have got wonderful speed.[27]

In short the horse had acquired a position of a very valuable and useful animal.

Persia was known as the breeding place of good horses.[28] So also Kāmboja (Afghanistan) appears to be the home of good horses.[29] There was a custom of worshipping horses[30] before starting on a military campaign as well as on auspicious occasions.[31] The custom continues in vogue in some form even at the present time and horses are worshipped at Dasarā and Divāḷī time. The bodies of war-horses were covered by metallic armours.[32] There were cavalry battalions in ancient India as an integral part of the fighting forces.[33]

LION (सिंह) : Among the forest animals, the lion is considered their king. The colour of the animal is either black as in the case of the African lion or grey (tawny). It is a very powerful and fearless animal belonging to the canine species. The term lion-man (पुरुषसिंह) therefore

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26. *Kumārasambhava* XVI. 43 :
तुरंगसादिनं शस्त्रहृतप्राणं गतं भुवि ।
अबद्धोऽपि महावाजी न साश्रुनयनोऽत्यजत् ॥

27. *Śākuntala* I. 9.
Vikramorvaśīya Act I, p. 13 :
अनेन रथवेगेन पूर्वप्रस्थितं वैनतेयमप्यासादयेयम् ।

28. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 62 : सङ्ग्रामस्तुमुलस्तस्य पाश्चात्यैरश्वसाधनैः ।
„ V. 73 :
दीर्घेष्वमी नियमिताः पटमण्डपेषु निद्रां विहाय वनजाक्ष वनायुदेश्याः ।

29. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 69.

30. „ IV. 25 : वाजिनीराजनाविधौ ।

31. „ IV. 25.

32. „ IV. 56 :
अभ्यभूयत वाहानां चरतां गात्रशिक्षितैः ।
वर्मभिः पवनोद्धूतराजतालीवनध्वनिः ॥

33. *Kumārasambhava* XIV. 33, 41, 43; *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 56.

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connotes not only great physical strength and beauty but reckless bravery and a generous disposition.[34] In *Śākuntala*, the infant Bharata is represented to snatch a lion's cub from the very teats of its mother and sportively count its teeth by forcing open its mouth.[35] In Canto IX of *Raghuvaṁśa* Daśaratha stirs up the ferocity of the wild lions by the resounding twang of his bow-string and kills them as they were the hereditary and inveterate enemies of elephants who were useful to him in war.[36] In *Kumārasambhava* the lions are referred to as standing in front of their forest caves, looking on fearlessly at the vast army of the Gods on its way to fight with Tāraka.[37] Dhruvasiddhi, a king of the Ikṣvāku race, is mentioned to have been killed by a ferocious lion while hunting in the forest.[38] Lion is reputed to be the mount of Pārvatī, and Kumāra is said to have been in the habit of touching him sportively.[39] In Canto II of *Raghuvaṁśa*, the fake lion's parley with Dilīpa is the finest specimen of its kind and one of the beauty spots of Kālidāsian literature.

TIGER (व्याघ्र) : Next in importance and power in the jungle life is the tiger, who also belongs to the feline species. Tigers are found in many parts of India. Daśaratha by his wonderful dexterity in archery is said to have filled with arrows the jaws of the tigers who attacked him.[40] The animal is not regarded with respect equal to the lion al-

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34. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVIII. 35 : सिंहादवापद्विपदं नृसिंहः।

35. *Śākuntala* Act VII, p. 241 : जृम्भस्व सिंह, दन्तांस्ते गणयिष्ये।

36. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 65 : तान्हत्वा गजकुलबद्धतीव्रवैरान्।

37. *Kumārasambhava* XIV. 29 :
गुहागृहान्ताद्बहिरेत्य हेलया तस्थुर्विशङ्कं नितरां मृगाधिपाः।

38. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVIII. 35 : मृगायताक्षो मृगयाविहारी सिंहादवापद्विपदं नृसिंहः।

39. *Kumārasambhava* XI. 44 : स्पृशन्नुमाकेसरिणं सलीलम्।

40. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 63 :
शिक्षाविशेषलघुहस्ततया निमेषात्तूणीचकार शरपूरितवक्त्ररन्ध्रान् (व्याघ्रान्)

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though he is scarcely less in physical might, probably owing to his low cunning and needless cruelty.

BOAR (वराह) : This is a very powerful animal with thin short legs and a fat round well-filled-in body and moves with great rapidity. His flesh is much relished. The beast is fond of the leaves of a plant called मुस्ता (नागरमोथा or भद्रमोथा Mar.). When excited, the rough hairs of his body bristle up and stand on end.[42] It fearlessly and ferociously attacks the hunter. Daśaratha it is stated rivetted them to adjoining trees by skilfully hitting their thighs with his arrows.[43] The animal is very fond of wallowing in muddy puddles of water. It is easy to track him by his foot-prints which are broad and well-marked.[44] His snout (the front part of his face) is so strong that it can thereby easily dig into fairly hard ground.[45]

God Viṣṇu's second incarnation was that of a boar who upheld and supported the earth on his powerful tusks during the great deluge (प्रलय).[46] It roams about in large herds and lays waste vast tracts of cultivated land and is therefore considered a great pest of agriculture.

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41. *Śākuntala* II. 6 : विश्रब्धं क्रियतां वराहपतिभिर्मुस्ताक्षतिः पल्वले ।

42. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 60. विध्यन्तमुद्भृतसटाः प्रतिहन्तुमीषुः ।

43. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 60 :
नात्मानमस्य विविदुः सहसा वराहा वृक्षेषु विद्धमिषुभिर्जघनाश्रयेषु ।

44. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 59 :
उत्तस्थुषः सपदि पल्वलपङ्कमध्यान्मुस्ताप्ररोहकवलावयवानुकीर्णम् ।
जग्राह स द्रुतवराहकुलस्य मार्गं सुव्यक्तमार्द्रपदपङ्क्तिभिरायताभिः ॥

45. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* I. 17 :
सभद्रमुस्तं परिशुष्ककर्दमं सरः खनन्नायतपोतृमण्डलैः ।
वरैर्मयूखैरभितापितो भृशं वराहयूथो विशतीव भूतलम् ॥

46. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 8 :
रसातलादादिभवेन पुंसा भुवः प्रयुक्तोद्वहनक्रियायाः ।
अस्याच्छमम्भः प्रलयप्रवृद्धं मुहूर्तवक्त्राभरणं बभूव ॥

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WILD BUFFALO (महिष) : It is a huge, powerful black beast and very dangerous if provoked. It is very fond of wallowing in shallow ditchwater in the jungle especially in hot days.[47] Daśaratha is said to have killed wild buffaloes by shooting arrows through their eyes when they attacked him.[48] कासर which is another name for महिष is the reputed mount of the God of Death.[49] It does not appear that wild buffaloes were tamed at that time for agricultural and other useful work nor was the milk of the she-buffalo known as a very useful article of nutriment as it is at present.

JAGUAR (शार्दूल) : A kind of very powerful animal apparently akin to the tiger species. The skins of Śārdūlas were used as coverlets for the seats of *yogins* (ascetics) or as screens or curtains.[50] A very powerful man is often described as a नरशार्दूल.

ŚARABHA : This animal is described as अष्टपादपशुविशेषः. This animal is said to pull up water from deep wells or pits in the forest in the hot season.[51] How he does it, is not indicated. He is considered to be even stronger than a lion.[52]

In *Meghadūta* I. 54 this animal is described as attacking the cloud.[53]

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47. *Śākuntala* II. 6 : गाहन्तां महिषा निपानसलिलं शृङ्गैर्मुहुस्ताडितं ।

48. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 61 :
तेनाभिघातरभसस्य विकृष्य पत्री वन्यस्य नेत्रविवरे महिषस्य मुक्तः ।

49. *Kumārasambhava* XIV. 7 :
अधिष्ठितः कासरमुद्धुरं मुदा वैवस्वतो दण्डधरस्तमन्वगात् ।

50. *Kumārasambhava* III. 44 :
सदेवदारुद्रुमवेदिकायां शार्दूलचर्मव्यवधानवत्याम् (त्रियम्बकं संयमिनं ददर्श) ।

51. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* I. 23 : शरभकुलमजिह्मं प्रोद्धरत्यम्बु कूपात् ।

52. अष्टपादः शरभः सिंहघाती ।

53. *Meghadūta* I. 54 :
ये संरम्भोत्पतनरभसाः स्वाङ्गभङ्गाय तस्मि-
न्मुक्ताध्वानं सपदि शरभा लङ्घयेयुर्भवन्तम् ।

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This beast appears to have now become extinct.

CAMARĪ (चनगाय Mar.) : Camarī is a species of deer with a thick, bushy tail of which चामरs (चवरीs Mar.) or fly-whisks are made. चामर with छत्र is considered an emblem of royalty or divinity,[54] its purpose being to drive away the flies and to fan a royal person with a gentle and pleasant breeze. Himālaya, the king of the mountains, is fancied by the poet as being served with चामरs in the shape of the bushy tails of the चमरी deer, roaming in its vast expanse, justifying his claim to royalty.[55] Later on the poet remarks that the चमरी deer, if it had some sense of discernment, would not think so much of her beautiful tail after seeing the ravishing splendour of Pārvatī's hair.[56] The colour of the chowrie is shining white.

Daśaratha is said to have deprived the चमरीs only of their beautiful tails in the same way as he deprived the other kings of their chowries (took away their royal status from them).[57]

When Rāma entered Ayodhyā in a grand procession Lakṣmaṇa stood behind his seat wafting a chowrie over him. चमरी deer is still found in some parts of the Himalayas. Forest conflagrations, it is said, burn out and destroy the tails of the चमरीs.[58]

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54. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 42 :
मूर्ते च गङ्गायमुने तदानीं सचामरे देवमसेविषाताम् ।
Kumārasambhava XII. 20 : उद्वीज्यमानं चमरैर्गणाभ्याम् ।

55. „ I. 13 :
लाङ्गूलविक्षेपविसर्पिशोभैरितस्ततश्चन्द्रमरीचिगौरैः ।
यस्यार्थयुक्तं गिरिराजशब्दं कुर्वन्ति बालव्यजनैश्चमर्यः ॥

56. *Kumārasambhava* I. 48 :
लज्जा तिरश्चां यदि चेतसि स्यादसंशयं पर्वतराजपुत्र्याः ।
तं केशपाशं प्रसमीक्ष्य कुर्युर्बालप्रियत्वं शिथिलं चमर्यः ॥

57. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 66 :
चमरान्परितः प्रवर्तिताश्वः क्वचिदाकर्णविकृष्टभल्लवर्षी ।
नृपतीनिव तान्वियोज्य सद्यः सितबालव्यजनैर्जगाम शान्तिम् ॥

58. *Meghadūta* I. 53 : बाधेतोल्काक्षपितचमरीबालभारो दवाग्निः ।

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DOG (श्वान) : It is curious that the dog which is now a prime favourite among domestic animals had hardly any place in the life of the ancient Indians and none whatsoever in the Āśramas where Ahiṁsā reigned supreme. Under certain circumstances the long-drawn-out howling of dogs with their faces turned towards the sun was considered an evil omen.[59]

It was supposed that dogs in the month of Kārtika (November) have a tendency to become rabid and run wild.[60]

The dogs even in those days had an important place in a hunting expedition.[61]

CAT (बिडाल) : There is hardly any reference in the works of Kālidāsa to this animal except in Act VI of *Śākuntala* and Act IV of *Mālavikāgnimitra*.[62]

RAM (मेष) or *SHEEP* : Curiously enough this animal is reputed to be the mount of the Fire God (अग्नि).[63] It is difficult to understand why the goat of all animals should be chosen to carry the God of Fire. मेष is almost a synonym for imbecility, मेषपात्र meaning a weak, helpless person. During the auspicious ceremony of marriage a ringlet made of the wool of sheep was to be worn by the

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59. *Kumārasambhava* XV. 24 :
ऊर्ध्वीकृतास्या रविदत्तदृष्टयः समेत्य सर्वे सुरविद्विषः पुरः ।
श्वानः स्वरेण श्रवणान्तशातिना मिथो रुदन्तः करुणेन निर्ययुः ॥

60. *Kumārasambhava* XV. 41 :
श्वानः प्रमत्ता इव कार्तिके निशि स्वैरं वनान्ते मृगधूर्तका इव ।

61. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 53 : श्वगणिवागुरिकैः प्रथमास्थितं (वनम्) ।

62. *Śākuntala* Act VI, p. 226 :
बिडालगृहीतो मूषिक इव निराशोऽस्मि जीविते संवृत्तः ।
Mālavikāgnimitra Act IV, p. 62 : बिडालगृहीतायाः परभृतिकायाः ।

63. *Kumārasambhava* XIV. 6 :
तमन्वगच्छद्विरिशृङ्गसोदरं मदोद्धतं मेषमधिष्ठितः शिखी ।

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bride[64] presumably to make her as tame and docile as the proverbial sheep.

CROCODILE (मकर) : The crocodile figures in *Kumārasambhava* as the mount of *Varuṇa* the Sea God.[65] Curiously enough it is also the mount of Jupiter the Sea God of the Greeks. When high personages such as members of the royal family were to bathe in tanks or rivers the crocodiles were forcibly drawn out from that part by means of nets[66]—a necessary precaution as the crocodiles are dangerous carnivorous animals.

WHALE (निमि) : The whale is one of the largest animals inhabiting the ocean. He feeds himself in the peculiar manner described by the poet. The huge creature at a gulp swallows gallons of sea water together with a large number of small fish inside. At the top of his head there are large holes which serve as nostrils and through these holes he throws out the water in large jets. The fishes which cannot get out through these holes serve him as his food.[67] In descriptions like these, the poet's close observation of nature becomes manifest.

SHARK (नक्र) : मातङ्गनक्रs are sharks as big as an elephant.[68] These animals are very rapacious and danger-

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64. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 25 :
धात्र्यङ्गुलीभिः प्रतिसार्यमाणमूर्णामयं कौतुकहस्तसूत्रम् ।
Raghuvaṁśa XVI. 87 :
तस्याः स्पृष्टे मनुजपतिना साहचर्याय हस्ते
माङ्गल्योर्णावलयिनि पुरः पावकस्योच्छिखस्य ।

65. *Kumārasambhava* XIV. 9 :
नवोद्यदम्भोधरघोरदर्शने युद्धाय रूढो मकरे महत्तरे ।

66. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 55 : आनायिभिस्तामपकृष्टनक्राम् (सरयूम्) ।

67. „ XIII. 10 :
ससत्त्वमादाय नदीमुखाम्भः संमीलयन्तो विवृताननत्वात् ।
अमी शिरोभिस्तिमयः सरन्ध्रैरूर्ध्वं वितन्वन्ति जलप्रवाहान् ॥

68. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 11 :
मातङ्गनक्रैः सहसोत्पतद्भिर्भिन्नान्द्विधा पश्य समुद्रफेनान् ।

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ous to life. Therefore they are to be taken out of the lakes or rivers before large number of persons are allowed to bathe there.[69]

SERPENT (भुजङ्ग) : A fairly large-sized poisonous reptile reputed to be very ferocious and vindictive. His bite is generally fatal and he inflicts it at the least provocation. He has got a forked tongue and is therefore called द्विजिह्व[70] i.e. having two tongues. He is traditionally credited with having a large bright jewel in his head.[71] He is also called चक्षुःश्रवा (one who hears by means of his eyes) as his ears are not visible.

The serpents are much patronized by the God Śaṅkara, who wears them round about his body.[72]

A serpent especially a black one is associated with an ill-omen. A black serpent was observed coiled up round the banner of Tāraka when he proceeded to meet his death at the hand of the invincible Kumāra.[73]

A serpent is said to be amenable to certain मन्त्रs (incantations) whereby he is rendered powerless and inoffensive.[74]

RĀJILA : A non-poisonous inoffensive reptile.[75]

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69. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 55 : आनायिभिस्तामपकृष्टनक्राम् ।
,, VII. 30 : ह्रदा प्रसन्ना इव गूढनक्राः ।
70. ,, XIV. 41 :
अमर्षणः शोणितकाङ्क्षया किं पदा स्पृशन्तं दशति द्विजिह्वः ।
71. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 12 :
वेलानिलाय प्रसृता भुजङ्गा महोर्मिविस्फूर्जथुनिर्विशेषाः ।
सूर्यांशुसंपर्कसमृद्धरागैर्व्यज्यन्त एते मणिभिः फणस्थैः ॥
Kumārasambhava V. 43 : कः करं प्रसारयेत्पन्नगरत्नसूचये ।
72. ,, V. 66 :
करेण शम्भोर्वलयीकृताहिना सहिष्यते तत्प्रथमावलम्बनम् ।
Kumārasambhava V. 78 : पिनद्धभोगी ।
73. ,, XV. 30 :
निर्यद्विषोल्कानलगर्भफूत्कृतं ध्वजे जनस्तस्य महाहिमैक्षत ।
74. *Raghuvaṁśa* II. 32 : भोगीव मन्त्रौषधिरुद्धवीर्यः ।
75. ,, XI. 27 : किं महोरगविसर्पिविक्रमो राजिलेषु गरुडः प्रवर्तते ।

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KHADGA (भेकर Mar.) : Mallinātha says that they are a species of deer. In Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary खड्गधेनुका is interpreted as a female rhinoceros. In Canto IX of *Raghuvaṁśa*, Daśaratha is said to have chopped off the heavy branching horns of the खड्गs. Mallinātha therefore appears to be right. This animal very probably is a big-sized deer with large branching horns called भेकर in Maharashtra.[76]

BISON (गवय) : A bison, a large powerful animal, is a species of a forest buffalo. He is referred to in Canto I of *Kumārasambhava* as being scared away by the resounding bellows of God Śaṅkara's mouth.[77]

BIRDS

PEACOCK (मयूर) : A favourite bird owing to his beautiful and many-coloured feathers. In palaces and mansions of the rich, peacocks were and are still kept with much expense and trouble. In *Meghadūta* it is stated that in the Yakṣa's abode at Alakā a golden rod fixed in a marble slab inset with green-coloured jewels was seen, where the favourite peacock of his wife roosted after nightfall. Peacocks were taught to dance by the clapping of young and beautiful ladies to the tune of their jingling bangles.[78]

The peacock is reputed to be the mount of Kumāra, the son of the God Śaṅkara,[79] as also of Sarasvatī the Goddess of Learning.

The advent of the monsoon time is a festive occasion for the peacocks. They spread out their bejewelled feathery tail, start dancing with joy and respond to the call of thunder by their shrill cries.[80]

76. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 62 :
प्रायो विषाणपरिमोक्षलघूत्तमाङ्गान्खड्गांश्चकार नृपतिर्निशितैः क्षुरप्रैः ।
77. *Kumārasambhava* I. 56 :
दृष्टः कथंचिद्गवयैर्विविग्नैरसोढसिंहध्वनिरुन्ननाद ।
78. *Meghadūta* II. 16.
79. ,, I. 44; *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 4.
80. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* II. 16.
Meghaduta I. 32 : बन्धुप्रीत्या भवनशिखिभिर्दत्तनृत्योपहारः ।

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In *Raghuvaṁśa* the rumbling of Dilīpa's chariot is mistaken by the peacocks for thunder which they welcome with their high-pitched screechings.[81]

The feathers of the peacock fully spread out in their beautiful panoply of variegated colours and jewel-like round spots, are lovingly compared by the poets to the abundant black tresses of young maidens inset with flowers.[82] In his hunting expedition (*Raghuvaṁśa* IX) Daśaratha avoids discharging his arrows at the peacocks owing to the resemblance of their wealth of feathers to the adorned tresses of his beautiful queens.[83]

Like the eagle he is the natural enemy of the serpents. In describing the burning heat of summer time the poet in *Ṛtusaṁhāra* says that, although snakes rendered helpless and desperate by the intolerable heat of the sun's rays take shelter under the spread-out feathers of the peacock, the latter forgetting his natural hostility does not care to kill them (as he himself is nearly half dead with the oppressive heat).[84]

The peacock is said to mistake the sound of drums for the distant thunder.[85]

In Canto XVI of *Raghuvaṁśa* in the striking contrast drawn between Ayodhyā as it was once, and what it is after its abandonment by Kuśa, the plight of pet peacocks is graphically described. Their resting rods destroyed, their joyful dances at an end owing to the silence of the drums, their beautiful feathers burnt by the forest fire, these poor deserted creatures take refuge on the trees like their brothers of the wild forest.[86]

The peacock's feathers are used by cowherds and by

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81. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 39.
82. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 22.
83. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 67.
84. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* I. 16.
85. *Mālavikāgnimitra* I. 21 :
जीमूतस्तनितविशङ्किभिर्मयूरैरुद्वीवैरनुरसितस्य पुष्करस्य ।
निर्ह्रादिन्युपहितमध्यमस्वरोत्था मायूरी मदयति मार्जना मनांसि ॥
86. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 14.

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certain wild tribes such as Kirātas as a kind of decoration on account of their somewhat rakish, bizarre appearance.[87]

CUCKOO (कोकिल) : This little black bird is traditionally considered as the harbinger of spring time. Its sweet monotonous note is supposed to have a peculiar fascination for young persons, either male or female, whose passion, it is said, it inflames beyond control.[88] On hearing the magic cooing of the cuckoo, even proud and stand-offish girls tamely submit to the embraces of their lovers.[89] No description of the vernal season could be complete without an honoured reference to this bird.[90]

It is very fond of the fully efflorescent mango tree whose fresh sprouting blossoms it eats with avidity with the result, it is said, that his voice becomes more appealingly sweet and also causes intoxication to the bird itself.[91]

It is traditionally supposed that the cuckoo carefully mixes up her eggs with those of the crow, both being coal-black in colour. Thus the young ones of the cuckoo are brought up by the crow in complete ignorance of their real nature. The cuckoo is therefore called अन्यपुष्टा or परभृता (nourished and brought up by others).[92] Duṣyanta's poisonous taunt levelled at Śakuntalā in Act V of *Śākuntala* is based on this fiction. The king suggests that the mother of Śakuntalā is a परभृता (parasite or prostitute) and therefore it is but natural that she should arrange to have her child brought up by a stranger.

This bird making the same monotonous sound appears to have been given an exaggerated importance by the poets

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87. *Meghadūta* I. 15; *Mālavikāgnimitra* V. 10.
88. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 34.
89. *Kumārasambhava* III. 32 :

चूताङ्कुरास्वादकषायकण्ठः पुंस्कोकिलो यन्मधुरं चुकूज ।
मनस्विनीमानविघातदक्षं तदेव जातं वचनं स्मरस्य ॥

90. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 14, 20; *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 25.
91. *Kumārasambhava* III. 32.
92. *Śākuntala* V. 22 :

प्रागन्तरिक्षगमनात्स्वमपत्यजातमन्यैर्द्विजैः परभृताः खलु पोषयन्ति ।

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and lovers, perhaps owing to the association of ideas as it tunes its cooings with the advent of spring time. It is a little black bird somewhat like an undersized crow and poor in appearance.

Besides mango blossom and fruit it is said to be fond of the ripe fruit of राजजम्बूद्रुम.[93]

CĀTAKA : The small bird is a symbol of mendicancy and extreme neediness. It is said that even when rain falls most plentifully it is difficult for the Cātaka to allay his thirst as he can only drink such stray drops of water as may accidentally fall in his open and upraised beak.[94] The legend relating to this bird given in S. P. Pandit's Commentary on *Vikramorvaśīya* is referred to in Chapter XII. The sweet chattering of the bird heard on the left side of travellers is considered a good omen.[95] Like the peacock and the crane, the Cātaka eagerly awaits and welcomes the rains.

It appears that the perpetual and unquenchable thirst of this bird is a mere poetical fiction.

SWAN or *FLAMINGO* (हंस) : This bird is generally white in colour with a long neck and graceful motion. There is also a black-coloured species called Kādamba.[96]

The graceful gait of a young woman is compared to that of a swan. She is therefore called हंसगमना.[97]

Swan is reputed to be a lover of cleanliness and therefore does not like to stay in the muddy plains during the rainy season, but on its advent promptly migrates to the Mānasa lake and other more cleanly regions.[98]

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93. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 27.
94. *Kumārasambhava* VI. 27; *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 17; XVII. 60; *Ṛtusaṁhāra* II. 3.
95. *Meghadūta* I. 9.
96. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 55.
97. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 17; *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 32, 33; *Kumārasambhava* I. 34.
98. *Meghadūta* I. 11;
„ II. 13 :
यस्यास्तोये कृतवसतयो मानसं संनिकृष्टं
नाध्यास्यन्ति व्यपगतशुचस्त्वामपि प्रेक्ष्य हंसाः ।

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The conventional belief is that the bird feeds on pearls and the filaments of lotus. All this however is poetical fiction. They feed on insects and fishes like other aquatic birds.

The sound made by swans is said to imitate the jinglings of the anklets which adorn the feet of young girls.[99]

Swan is said to be the mount of Brahmā the creator.

PIGEON (पारावत) : The bird is generally white in colour. There is a black species also. It is extremely lecherous.[100] That the birds feed on hard particles of stones is another fanciful fiction. These birds are mostly fond of human neighbourhood and reside in crevices of house terraces or in their eaves or projecting roofs and feed on corn and insects.[101]

In Canto IX of *Kumārasambhava* Agni in the guise of a pigeon is described as trespassing into the inner apartment of Śaṅkara when he and Pārvatī were in intimate association. The description of the pigeon (Agni) is strikingly beautiful and realistic.[102]

The front portion of the neck of the dark-coloured pigeon is shining, and the deep blue-black colour of the body of Lava and Kuśa is compared to this colour.[103]

HĀRĪTA: Hārīta is also a kind of pigeon.[104] Kapota also is a small-sized pigeon.[105]

CAKRAVĀKA: A fat well-shaped bird about the size of a water-fowl. According to poetical convention it is a symbol of conjugal fidelity. After night-fall the birds delude themselves that they are separated from their mate though in reality only screened away by a lotus leaf.

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99. *Kumārasambhava* I. 34; *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 1.
100. *Bhartṛhari* :
पारावतः खरशिलाकणमात्रभोजि कामी भवत्यनुदिनं वद कोऽत्र हेतुः ।
101. *Meghadūta* I. 38.
102. *Kumārasambhava* IX. 1–4.
103. *Uttararāmacarita* VI. 25.
104. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 46.
105. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act IV, p. 76.

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It is said to be a very gullible bird.[106] Sometimes this foolish creature merely turns its head away from its mate and cries piteously deluding itself that it is separated from her.[107]

These are semi-aquatic birds and their colour is tawny and golden.[108]

The birds being plump, well-shaped and of yellowish colour are compared to the well-developed breasts of a young woman.[109]

CRANE (सारस) : These birds move in the sky in rows and well-ordered lines. Their chattering sound has a certain charm for the ear. These are semi-aquatic birds[110] and mostly frequent tanks and rivers for catching fish.[111]

BEE (अलि) : The bee is a small dark winged insect much made of by Sanskrit poets, owing to its constant association with flowers and its sweet murmuring, humming sound.

A row of bees is fancied by the poets to be the string of the bow of the God of Love.[112]

The face of a beautiful lady with coal-black hair is compared to a lotus with bees hovering round about it.[113]

A lover kissing the mouth of his beloved is compared to a bee sucking the honey from a lotus bud or flower.[114]

The bee loves the aggressive pungent smell of the ichor issuing from the temples of an elephant even more than the mild odour of flowers and will willingly leave the latter to crowd round about the rutting temples of an elephant.[115]

The rapidly moving black pupils of the eye of a young

106. *Śākuntala* Act IV, p. 141; *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 39.
107. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 32, 61.
108. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 30.
109. ,, XVI. 63; *Śṛṅgāratilaka* 1.
110. ,, I. 41.
111. ,, XIII. 30; *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 8, 16.
112. *Kumārasambhava* IV. 15.
113. ,, VII. 16.
114. *Śākuntala* III. 21; *Kumārasambhava* IX. 1.
115. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 7.

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beautiful woman are compared to a restlessly moving bee and the white portion of the eye to a white lotus.[116]

Aja compares the wordless mouth of the deceased Indumatī to a lotus closed during the night time wherein the murmur of the bees is silent.[117]

A cluster of bees hovering about a Tilaka flower is fancied to be the dark spot on the forehead of the forest scenery.[118]

In *Sākuntala* the persistent molestation by an importunate bee of the heroine, affords a convenient excuse or pretext to Duṣyanta to trespass on the privacy of the young ladies of the hermitage.

In short, Sanskrit literature has fully exploited the humming black insect—much more than perhaps he really deserves.

CROW (काक): One of Nature's scavenger birds, coal black, very shrewd, and active.

He figures in Canto XII of *Raghuvaṁśa*. He had the hardihood to attack and wound the breasts of Sītā with his foul nails[119] and was therefore condignly punished by Rāma by putting out one of his eyes by the use of इषिकास्त्र (इषिका = reed). It is believed that the crow has now only one eye which he uses with great skill and dexterity. He is called ऐन्द्रि i.e. the son of Indra. This dignified appellation for the bird may be the result of his association with the story of the rape of Ahalyā by Indra.

In *Meghadūta* the crows are mentioned as hurriedly building their nests in the Piṁpaḷa or other big trees of the villages (or in the Buddhist Vihāras which were deserted and crumbling down at that time) on the advent of the monsoon.

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116. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 11; *Meghadūta* I. 47.
117. ,, VIII. 55.
118. ,, IX. 41 :
अलिभिरञ्जनबिन्दुमनोहरैः कुसुमपङ्क्तिनिपातिभिरङ्कितः ।
न खलु शोभयति स्म वनस्थलीं न तिलकस्तिलकः प्रमदामिव ॥
119. *Raghuvaṁśa* XII. 22.

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CRANE (बलाक) : These are long-necked birds of white colour. They are mentioned in *Meghadūta* as forming rows in the sky to welcome the cloud whose advent synchronizes with their breeding season.[120]

In *Raghuvaṁśa*, Tāḍakā (the demoness) with the white human skulls used as ear-ornaments, is compared to a volume of black clouds accompanied by cranes.[121]

HERON (क्रौञ्च) : He is the famous bird whose untimely and tragic death at the hands of the hunter was the cause of inspiring the sage Vālmīki with poetic fervour which later on resulted in his composing the world-famous epic *Rāmāyaṇa*. In the *Ṛtusaṁhāra* the time of Śiśira (cold season) is mentioned as resounding with the cries of the herons resting in the forest trees.[122]

WATER FOWL (कारण्डव) : In *Vikramorvaśīya* the bird which is mostly aquatic in its habits is described as leaving the heated waters of the lake during mid-day to seek refuge under the lotus leaf on its bank.[123]

In *Ṛtusaṁhāra* in the description of the Śarad (autumnal) season the rivers are described as having their ripples broken by the beaks of these birds. It appears that they move in large numbers over the surface of water and while hunting for fishes, disturb the surface of a river which in autumn is smooth flowing.[124]

WAG-TAIL (खञ्जन) : This is a small active bird. There appears to be a superstitious belief that if one sees this bird sitting on a lotus-leaf, he becomes the commander of the four-divisioned army or a far-famed poet or a king.[125]

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120. *Meghadūta* I. 9.
121. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 15.
122. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* V. 1.
123. *Vikramorvaśīya* II. 22
124. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* III. 8.
125. *Śṛṅgāratilaka* 4 :
एको हि खञ्जनवरो नलिनीदलस्थो दृष्टः करोति चतुरङ्गबलाधिपत्यम्
Śṛṅgāratilaka 5.

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CAKORA : This bird is known as thirsting or pining for the moon.[126] Somehow or other the eyes of a beautiful woman are compared to those of a Cakora.[127]

VULTURE (गृध्र) : This is a fairly big carnivorous bird. He figures in *Vikramorvaśīya* as having whisked away the (सङ्गमनीय) jewel.[128] This bird was subsequently killed while resting on a tree in the hermitage of the sage Cyavana by Āyu the young prince which act being against the rules of the hermitage resulted in Āyu being restored to his parents. Jaṭāyu the mighty bird who fought with Rāvaṇa for saving Sītā from his clutches is referred to in vv. 53-56 of Canto XII of *Raghuvaṁśa*.

GARUḌA : A powerful big bird reputed to be the king of birds. He is said to be the mount of the God Viṣṇu and a great enemy of the serpent race. As a result of the marriage of Kumudvatī the serpent girl (नागकन्या) with Kuśa the serpents are said to be relieved of the perpetual dread from Garuḍa because Kuśa was the son of Rāma, the incarnation of Viṣṇu.[129]

Garuḍa only kills big serpents and does not condescend to touch harmless reptiles.[130]

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126. *Gītagovinda* : स्फुरदधरसीधवे तव वचनचन्द्रमा रोचयति लोचनचकोरम्।
127. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 59.
128. *Vikramorvaśīya* V. 122.
129. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 88.
130. „ XI. 27.

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Chapter XX

GEOGRAPHY

Kalidāsa deals with the geography or rather the topography of India mainly in his *Raghuvaṁśa* and *Meghadūta*. In Canto IV of the former, he describes the victorious march of Raghu's army from Ayodhyā taking on the way the Vaṅgas, Kaliṅgas, Pāṇḍyas, Pārasīkas, Hūṇas, Kāmbhojas, Parvatīyagaṇas, Kāmarūpas and such other principalities; in Canto XIII, Rāma gives a somewhat sketchy description of that part of the Indian continent which lies between Laṅkā and Ayodhyā; and in Canto VI, the maid of honour of the princess Indumatī enumerates and describes the leading kingly dynasties supposed to hold away in India at the time of Indumatī-svayaṁvara. In *Meghadūta*, the poet appears on more familiar ground being much better acquainted with the tracts which he essays to describe. The description of cities, mountains, rivers in *Meghadūta* therefore is charmingly impressive and realistic. In Canto IV of *Raghuvaṁśa*, the poet is describing not so much the topography of the country but mainly the victorious march of an illustrious king. In Canto XIII of *Raghuvaṁśa*, the descriptions of the sea lying between Ceylon and the mainland of India, of Janasthāna and Pañcavaṭī (places of peculiar interest to Rama), the Mālyavat mountain, the Pampā lake, Agastyāśrama, the Citrakūṭa mountain, the Ganges in her confluence with the Yamunā are all well turned out, but these descriptions do not show that loving familiarity and richness of detail observable in *Meghadūta*.

The main difficulty with these geographical references is that the names of some of the cities, mountains, rivers used therein are nearly two thousand years old and have in some cases undergone so complete a change as to defy

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recognition or identification. Most of the places however are now identified with their present names. Some great and prosperous cities of those times have now sunk into obscurity and insignificance, some have shifted their location, some have been given foreign names by their temporary conquerors, e.g., Karṇāvatī is now known as Ahmedabad and Bhāgānagara as Hyderabad.

In *Kumārasambhava* there are grand descriptions of Himalayan scenery but as regards references to cities, mountains etc. there is a confusing mixture of fact, fiction and tradition. Mahākośiprapāta, Oṣadhiprastha, Meru, Mandāra, Gandhamādana, Amarāvatī are names mostly fabulous and imaginary. This Kāvya deals with gods, goddesses, divine and semi-divine beings, living a rarefied and celestial atmosphere on the whole.

One thing appears certain that even assuming that Kālidāsa lived about 2000 years ago, he affects to write about a time long anterior to his own. Some scholars are responsible for some ridiculous mistakes and anachronisms due to their disregard of the above fact. For instance an attempt is made to identify the Hūṇas mentioned in *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 68 with the white Huns who having been driven from Central Asia by the Chinese and Tartars about the latter half of the first century A.D. gradually founded a powerful empire in the Oxus Basin and about the fourth or fifth century A.D. proved powerful antagonists and rivals of the Persian Empire.

If it is assumed that Raghu conquered these identical Huns in the course of his victorious march, then it follows that he must have lived in the 3rd or 4th century A.D. and Rāma who is his great-grandson cannot therefore be placed earlier than 5th or 6th century A.D. even ignoring the fabulous life of 10,000 years ascribed to Daśaratha (*Raghuvaṁśā* X. 1) who must have been an exceptionally long-lived monarch. Following this argument to its legitimate conclusion, the Rāmāyaṇakāla and the conquest of southern India must be assigned to about the 5th or 6th century A.D. !!

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Mallinātha must therefore be right in explaining the word 'हूणाः' as 'हूणा जनपदाख्याः क्षत्रियाः', thus being the name of a branch of the Kṣatriya race.

It is not intended to complicate and encumber this chapter with references to the numerous inconclusive controversies on disputed points connected with the location, identity, and names of cities, rivers and mountains referred to in Kālidāsian literature. For all practical purposes we rely on the *Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India* by Nandlal Dey as a fairly reliable authority on this subject. There are geographical references in the Purāṇas but they are often conflicting and likely to lead to greater confusion. Modern writings such as Smith's *Early History of India,* Bhandarkar's *History of the Deccan,* Jaya Chandra Vidyaḷankara's *Bharat* and *Pillar Inscriptions of the Gupta Kings,* appear to shed some light on this difficult subject, but these hardly lead to definite conclusions on some of the disputed points.

Adverting to Canto IV of *Raghuvaṁśa* which describes the conquests of king Raghu the question which arises for consideration is whether Kālidāsa deals with the conditions of the country as they existed in his own time or within easy reach of his memory or whether he attempts to portray them as he imagined them to have existed in the time of king Raghu.

It is difficult to determine the exact period during which Raghu—if at all there was a king of that name—lived and reigned. Both popular belief and tradition as well as consideration of the natural sequence of events confirms the theory that the Rāmāyaṇa epoch must have preceded by some centuries that of the Kurukṣetra war. The latter period clearly points to a condition of the country when the Aryans were the dominant race all over the Indian continent, while the former covers a period in the history of the Indo-Aryan race when the southernmost part of India had still to be subjugated by the Aryans. Rāma is deified and raised to the status of an Avatāra because it was he who completed the Aryan conquest of India by bringing

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under sway the southern part of the continent where the aboriginal tribes, the Dravidian races especially, had long defied the prowess of the invading Aryans. When Rāma essayed to wage war with Rāvaṇa, the Lord of Laṅkā (Ceylon) and the leader of the powerful clan of the aborigines called the Rākṣasas, he had to cement alliances with other indigenous tribes whom the Aryans in the arrogance of their superior civilization, styled 'Monkeys', 'Bears' or 'Vultures'. Had Aryan rulers been in possession of large portions of southern India or a substantial part of it, Rāma would have certainly preferred alliances with them in preference to "Monkeys". The Pāṇḍya kings referred to in Canto IV of *Raghuvaṁśa* could not have therefore been in existence at the time of Rāma and much less at the time of Raghu, Rāma's great-grandfather. We have already made a reference to Hūṇas mentioned in *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 68.

The great Mahābhārata war was fought at a time when almost every part of India must have been over-run and ruled by chiefs of the Aryan clan. Śalya was the king of Madradeśa which included a greater part of the south of India.

The time of the great Mahābhārata war is attempted to be fixed by Prof. Siddhanta[1] at about 1000 B.C. by reliance on the genealogies of kingly dynasties mentioned in the Purāṇas and references to heroic personalities in the Vedic and Brahmanic literature. This calculation appears to be approximately correct. Regarding the time of *Rāmāyaṇa* however there is still considerable dispute. There are those who like Prof. Weber are of the opinion that the Rāmāyaṇa period followed after the age of Kṛṣṇa, the Pāṇḍavas and the great Kurukṣetra war. The reasons given by him are twofold: (1) The highly ornate and literary style of *Rāmāyaṇa* points to a later date. (2) The Aryan invaders in the first instance must have fought out and settled their internecine disputes first before undertaking their perilous campaign for the conquest of southern India.

1. Vide Chap. III of *Heroic Age of India* by Prof. N. K. Siddhanta 1929 ed.

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Regarding the literary style of the *Rāmāyaṇa* which is certainly more ornate and finished than that of the *Mahābhārata* the fact might have been due to the former's comparatively much smaller bulk and the unmistakable impress it bears of being the handiwork of one person. Opinion is often expressed that the modernized style of Sanskrit literature dates from Pāṇini's successful attempt to codify and standardize the grammar of that language. In the first place there is a great divergence of views as regards the date of Pāṇini. Prof. Weber places him at about 200 B. C. while Dr. Bhandarkar places him at 700 B. C.! Whatever his real date may have been, it will be conceded that a grammarian as a rule collates, elucidates, systematizes and records the linguistic rules and conventions which prevail during his life-time and even before. These are not invented by him nor originate with him nor are discovered by him. The language of a highly intelligent and vital race such as the Aryans, must have kept on spontaneously developing, expanding and improving in refinement and complexity and the merit of Pāṇini lies in his amazing attempt to reduce it to a unique system by devising a wonderfully terse and almost algebraic method of expression. To date every Sanskrit literary piece written in a modernized and finished style as posterior to Pāṇini may therefore easily lead to erroneous conclusions.

Besides what reliable evidence is there in support of the assumption which is merely based on tradition that Vālmīki was a contemporary of Rāma and recorded in a world-renowned epic the chief events of the latter's life by anticipating them by his आर्ष (spiritual) vision? On the contrary it is more rational to suppose that Vālmīki lived a few centuries after Rāma, when he immortalized his life and achievements and invested him with a divine glamour by making him the hero of his monumental literary work.

Some scholars seriously think that *Rāmāyaṇa* is an allegory embodying the glorious campaign and conquest by the Aryans of the southernmost part of India and the

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complete subjugation of the powerful aboriginal tribes established there long before the Aryan penetration into the vast Indian continent. These tribes were divided into two classes: (1) the Rākṣasas—the hostile and militant tribes; (2) the Monkeys and the Bears—the friendly ones. Sītā was a purely fictitious personage (its etymological meaning being "the furrow") used as an emblem of the agricultural mode of life which was the main distinguishing hall-mark of the more civilized Aryan race as distinguished from the nomadic and hunting propensities of the non-Aryans. Rāma may have been a real king of the Raghu race of great valour and generalship round about whom Vālmīki may have woven his deathless saga to mark his great respect for the distinguished Aryan hero who firmly and finally established the supremacy of his race over the long-warring and hostile aboriginal people.

Popular tradition also favours the theory that the age of *Rāmāyaṇa* was anterior to that of the Mahābharata war. The episode of Candrasenā (wife of the mighty and invincible demon Ahi) who became violently enamoured of Rāma and subsequently re-incarnated herself as Satyabhāmā the favourite queen of Kṛṣṇa owing to the boon granted to her by Rāma in consideration of her meritorious services and deep devotion to himself, the accidental meeting between Arjuna and the centuries-old Māruti which resulted in the latter pledging himself to mount the chariot of the former, point to the same conclusion. The time-honoured Marathi hymn about the ten incarnations (दशावतार आरती)[2] clearly places Rāma before Kṛṣṇa in the chain of incarnations.

Prof. Weber's argument that the Aryans must have fought out and settled their internal disputes before marching against their southern antagonists may be easily turned against him. As long as the Aryans had to face a powerful common enemy they dared not engage themselves in an exterminating internecine and fratricidal war but the

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2. आरती सप्रेम जय जय विठ्ठल परब्रह्म ।

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security which comes as a result of complete freedom from foreign menace often tends to foster internal jealousies, rivalries and conflicts between the conquerors themselves. So also instead of assuming that Vālmīki was a contemporary of Rāma and wrote out the complete history of his life by virtue of his superhuman vision, the more natural theory that he was born a few centuries after Rāma and composed *Rāmāyaṇa* in the highly developed and ornate diction of his time is much more likely to appeal to the present rationalistic age.

Assuming therefore that Rāma the great-grandson of Raghu lived some centuries before the Great War, his date cannot be brought nearer than 15th century B. C. Raghu therefore must have lived sometime in the 17th century B. C. It therefore remains to be considered whether the description of the boundaries of India given as existing at that date in Canto IV of *Raghuvaṁśa* and the kingdoms and principalities enumerated in Canto VI can well accord with the condition of the country as it must have existed in about the 16th or 17th century before the Christian era. The Pāṇḍya dynasty referred to in Canto IV could not have existed at the time as almost the entire southern part of India must have been under the grip of the aborigines, the Aryan invaders not having infiltrated into that region. So also the Hūṇas referred to in *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 68 could not have been the white Huns who waged continuous war with the Persians and were defeated by Behramgour of Persia in the year 425 A. D. The reference to the kingdom of Mathurā in *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 46-51 was also an anachronism as the city could not have existed at the time of Aja if the statement appearing in v. 28 of Canto GV that Satrughna founded it on the bank of the Kālindī (Jumna) after killing Lavaṇa is taken as correct. Subject to this reservation we will proceed to deal with the victorious campaign of Raghu, and the tracts he is said to have traversed and conquered.

Raghu after leaving his capital proceeded towards the east (IV. 28). Thereafter he traversed the coastline of the Bay of Bengal (पूर्वसागर IV. 32). This coast the poet rightly

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describes as bluish dark with Tālī or palm-tree forests. The first clan or जानपद he had to face were the Suhmas, a people to the west or north-west of Bengal or rather that part of Bengal which lay to the west of the Ganges including Tamluk, Midnapur and also perhaps the districts of Hughli and Burdwan.[3] It appears that the Suhmas lived in a country abounding in cane-plants and the poet's taunt that they saved themselves by resorting to the way of the pliant canes (वृत्तिमाश्रित्य वैतसीम्), i.e., by bending themselves before the powerful conqueror, is apt and fitting. The country next attacked was Bengal whose people appear to have been well equipped with ships and were a maritime race. They offered some resistance but were utterly defeated (उत्खाताः) and thereafter re-instated (प्रतिरोपिताः) as it was customary for great kings in those days to conquer their opponents merely for the sake of glory and prestige and not for greed of land. The Vaṅgas like the कलम्s, i.e., rice plants, yielded to the conqueror a rich harvest in the shape of booty when they were uprooted and re-planted. This is a matchlessly beautiful simile borrowed from well-known plant life. The country of the Vaṅgas lay to the west of Tipperah. It must be distinguished from Gaud or North Bengal.[4] Pargiter identifies Vaṅga with the modern districts of Murshidabad, Nadia, Jessore, parts of Rajashahi Pabna and Faridpur.[5] The inhabitants of the country had access both to the Ganges and to the Brahmaputra, and therefore they were a sea-faring people.

After the conquest of the Vaṅgas the next turn was that of the Utkalas. It is said to be an abbreviation of Utkaliṅgas or Uttarakaliṅgas.[6] The Utkalas extended on the north to the river Kasai (Kapiśā) in Midnapur, and bordered on Kaliṅga on the south. The tract is what is now known as Orissa. These people appear to have been cowards as well as sneaks. Not only did they make an

3. *India in Kālidāsa* by Upadhyaya, p. 50.
4. „ „ p. 51.
5. "Ancient Countries in Eastern India", *J.A.S.B.* 1897, p. 85.
6. *India in Kālidāsa* by Upadhyaya, p. 51.

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abject surrender to the conqueror, but also showed him the way to the neighbouring Janapada or state named Kaliṅga. According to Nandlal Dey Kaliṅga was the country lying to the South of Orissa and North of Dravida on the border of the sea, having Manipur and Rajamahendri as the chief towns. Northern Circars were included in this province as also the Mahendra mountain. Before reaching the Kaliṅga country Raghu had to cross the Kapiśā river by means of a bridge made of elephants which were very often used for that purpose. The Kaliṅgas were famous for their rows of fighting elephants and the land was also famous for betel-nut plants and cocoanut trees. The king of Kaliṅgas who was also styled the lord of the Mahendra mountain was conquered by Raghu after a hard fight.

Thereafter Raghu proceeded to the southern part of India (अगस्त्याचरितामाशाम)along the shores of the Bay of Bengal which was adorned with fruit-laden betel-nut trees. The river Kāverī is the northern border of the southernmost part of India where Raghu encamped his mighty army. Thereafter he ascended the flanks of the Malaya mountain where the movements of his immense army frightened away the Hārītas (हारीत is a kind of pigeon) from the pepper trees where they were resting. Cardamom (एला) plants and sandalwood trees are the characteristic features of the plant life of this part of southern India and the poet makes graceful reference to them.

Thereafter the Pāṇḍyas, the renowned overlords of the greater part of southern India, were attacked by Raghu and their conquest rewarded the king with an immense stock of the finest pearls wrich the Tāmraparṇī river could alone produce. The Pāṇḍya country was in the extreme south of India to the southwest of Coladeśa. The mountain Malaya and the river Tāmraparṇī unmistakably fix the position of this tract. Its northwest boundary seems to have reached the Cauvery and extended to the south right up to the Indian Ocean. Its capital is said to be Uragapur (perhaps modern Madura). Thereafter having enjoyed a short stay on Malaya and Dardura (Nīlagiri) mountains he crossed the

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Sahyādri range frightening the Kerala (Malbar) women into casting off their ornaments, enjoying the fragrant dust of the Ketakī blossom blown broadcast by the winds moving over the Muralā river, the sweet odour of the Punnāga flowers and listening to the pleasant jingling sound of the Rājatālī (betel-nut) trees filled with wanton breezes.

Then follows a short reference to Aparānta, the south-western coast of India, the Konkan from Daman to Goa and Karnatak. By Aparānta Kālidāsa may also have meant the whole of the western border. The kings of Aparānta endowed the conqueror with booty commensurate in value with the vast wealth of the Arabian Sea.

Thereafter he crossed the Trikūṭa hills which are placed by some to the west of Nasik and by others near about Junnar.

After crossing the Trikūṭa mountain Raghu is said to have started on his conquest of the Pārasīkas. It is difficult to understand why the great king decided to assail a foreign power. It may have been that the Pārasīkas were aggressive and troublesome people or hostile in their intentions towards India. At any rate it appears that Raghu desired to teach them a sharp lesson and give them a bitter taste of the prowess of the Indian Aryans.

There has been also some speculation as to why Raghu decided to march to Persia by land instead of journeying from the sea route starting from Kalyāṇa (modern Kalyani), Śūrpāraka (modern Sopara) or Bhṛgukaccha (modern Broach), all well-known ports on the west coast of India at the time from where Persia could be reached. Mallinātha's explanation in this respect (समुद्रयानस्य निषिद्धत्वादिति भावः) can hardly be accepted as Indians at that time were well accustomed to seafaring life and sea journeys to remote parts of the world. The choice of the land route appears due to the fact that the king had a large army of elephants and other heavy accoutrements which must have made him reluctant to face the perils of the sea.

It is significant that Kālidāsa has omitted to describe or give any details of the places which he (Raghu) had

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to traverse on his way to Persia. It must be remembered that before the Christian era, Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Kabul, Kandahar and even some remoter places formed parts of India, and Persian territory formed the north-western boundary of the Indian continent. It is almost certain he must have entered Persia by the Bolan Pass.

There is no doubt that Kālidāsa had some first-hand information about the Persians. That even their ladies were addicted to wine-boozing, that their army was well equipped with a vast number of fine horses, that they were well versed in curing and beautifying skins of animals (आस्तीर्णाजिनरत्नासु), appear to be some realistic touches in Kālidāsa's description of Persia and Persians as they existed at the poet's time. Their round, yellow-coloured, pock-marked bearded faces, the poet aptly compares to honey-combs covered in part by roosting black bees—one of his striking unforgettable similies which have made him justly famous. The Persians were defeated and admitted their defeat by removing their head-dresses in the presence of the conqueror—an act showing humility and obedience which we are informed is still customary among the Parsees of the present day. The soldiers of the victorious monarch regaled themselves with wines resting on fine skins under the shade of the grape creepers. There is however no specific mention of the booty acquired by Raghu from the Persians except the reference to horses in v. 67. Persia was justly famous for its breed of fine horses and the word वनायुदेश्याः in v. 73 of Canto V has reference to Persian steeds.

The reading given in the latter portion of the first line of v. 67 has given rise to some controversy. In the majority of manuscripts the word वङ्कुतीर appears instead of सिन्धुतीर as in this verse. Mallināṭha substitutes सिन्धु for वङ्कु and explains that Sindhu is a river situate in Kashmir (सिन्धुनामा काश्मीरदेशेषु कश्चिन्नदविशेषः). He appears to have been driven to this explanation by his belief that Kashmir is the only country which produced कुङ्कुम or saffron. An equally fine

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variety of saffron, however, is produced in certain parts of Bactria or Bāhlīkadeśa which is watered by Vengsu and Vangku river. Commentators of *Raghuvaṁśa* earlier in date to Mallinātha are clearly of opinion that it is Vaṅku and not Sindhu which is referred to in v. 67. It appears therefore that Raghu encountered and defeated the Hūṇas in Bactria or in the valley of the Oxus.

The meaning of the latter part of v. 68 is not quite clear. हूणावरोधानां कपोलपाटलादेशि बभूव रघुचेष्टितम् । Mallinātha does not appear at his ease in explaining this line. He says that Raghu must have reddened the cheeks of the Hūṇa ladies in either of two ways: (1) striking their cheeks in anger, (2) by decorating the cheeks with red-coloured designs. The first of the two interpretations implies an extent of barbarity and violence not to be thought of in a highly civilized and humane king like Raghu and must therefore be rejected. The second, although it may point to a certain laxity of morals, may perhaps be excusable in a Kṣatriya conqueror. The meaning however does not appear to be very clear. The Hūṇas mentioned in v. 68 were a certain Kṣatriya race and not the white Huns. We have already dealt with this question (see page 398).

The next Janapada conquered by Raghu is Kāmboja. According to Nandlal Dey Kāmboja was the name of Afghanistan. This tract appears to be full of Akṣoṭa trees (v. 69). Kāmboja territory referred to here may be that part of Afghanistan which was considered foreign to and outside India. Prof. Upadhyaya considers Kāmboja to be Badakhsan and adjoining Ghalcha-speaking town of Munjan.[7] This tract also appears to be rich in producing an excellent breed of horses and Raghu was presented in his right of conquest with heaps of gold and excellent horses.

After conquering Kāmbojas, Raghu commenced to ascend the heights of the Himalayas enjoying the cool breezes of the Ganges on the way, the refreshing shade of the Nameru trees and the fragrance of musk with which

7. *India in Kālidāsa* by Prof. Upadhaya, p. 61.

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the stone slabs there were permeated. The royal elephants were tethered to the Sarala (Devadāru) trees which are plentiful on that mountain, and phosphorescent plants in that region served the king as his lamps.

On the Himalayan heights Raghu encountered certain mountain tribes (पर्वतीयाः गणाः). The use of the word गण may indicate गणराज्य or a kind of republic such as at one time is said to have ruled certain parts of India. The word क्षेपणीय used in v. 77, Mallinātha interprets as भिन्दिपाल meaning a small javelin. The word may be more appropriately interpreted as a sling (गोफण Mar.) with which foresters still shower their antagonists with stones with great effect. The stones hurled with the slings violently collided with the arrows from Raghu's army and produced sparks.

The name of one of such mountainous tribes was Utsavasaṅketas which expression may imply that their sex relations were of a loose character and persons of the opposite sexes met by assignations (सङ्केत) to indulge in boisterous bouts of sexual orgies.

Raghu avoided ascending the Kailāsa peak of the Himalayas and the poet fancies that the proud king deliberately refrained from an attack on Kailāsa because the peak was already violated and shaken by Rāvaṇa. This reckless anachronism should be carefully noted. Rāvaṇa who was the contemporary of Rāma the great-grandson of Raghu could not have shaken the Kāilasa summit before the time of Raghu's invasion with which we are dealing.

The Kirātas, the Utsavasaṅketas and the Kinnaras along with Kiṁpuruṣas must be aboriginal residents of remote parts of the Himalayan range who kept themselves severely aloof from the people of the plains and were therefore invested with a halo of mystery and some of them even with semi-divine glamour. Etymological sense of the word Kirāta is given in Harṣa's *Ratnāvalī* as wandering tribes.[8] Kinnaras and Gandharvas (who are referred to in v. 88 of Canto XV as having been vanquished by Bharata) are reputed to have been singers and musicians of the Gods.

[8] *Ratnāvalī* II. 3.

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Kirātas are referred to in *Kumārasambhava* I.6, Kinnaras in *Kumārasambhava* I.8 and *Meghadūta* I.56 and Kimpuruṣas in *Kumārasambhava* I.14.

Thereafter Raghu after descending from the Himalayas and crossing the Lohitya or Brahmaputrā river attacked Kāmarūpa (the territory between Gopalapara and Gohatti) whose capital appears to be Prāgjyotiṣa. Forests round about the tract abounded with fine elephants and Raghu was presented with the best of the lot. The victorious campaign of Raghu ends with conquest of Kāmarūpa. Thereafter he returned to his capital and proceeded to perform the Viśvajit sacrifice.

It has been already stated that the events recorded in Canto IV of *Raghuvaṁśa* should not be invested with a historical significance. The date of Raghu if at all he was a historical person is highly uncertain. He cannot be placed much earlier than 2000 B.C. The Janapadas mentioned and the country described in Cantos IV and VI of *Raghuvaṁśa* very probably had no existence at that time (i.e., in about 2000 B.C.) except in the poet's imagination.

The exigencies of a Mahākāvya made it necessary for the poet to compose this canto (IV) for glorifying the might of the great king of the Kākutstha race and the progenitor of Rāmacandra, the divine incarnation, as also to invest the Kāvya with the necessary heroic vein. It is also conjectured that in describing Raghu's conquests the poet was desirous of delineating the boundaries of India as they existed within easy reach of his memory. But in that case it is difficult to understand why he should make his hero extend his conquests right into the Persian territories. Kālidāsa, unlike Kalhaṇa the author of *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, had no pretentions to figure as a historian; otherwise he certainly would not have given Daśaratha a life of ten thousand years.

We have now to deal with Canto VI of *Raghuvaṁśa* where availing himself of the occasion of Indumatī's Svayaṁvara Kālidāsa enumerates the kingly dynasties holding sway not at the time of Aja but at about the period

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when he himself lived or within easy memory of his life-time.

MAGADHA: The first king to whom reference is made is Parantapa, the king of Magadha whose capital is stated to be Puṣpapura or Kusumapura later on styled Pāṭaliputra (Patna).[9] At the time of Jarāsandha the capital of Magadha was Rajgir (Girivrajapura). Puṣpapura was made the capital of Magadha by Ajātaśatru who was a contemporary of Buddha.

AṄGA: The country of Aṅga was round about Bhagalpura with Pampāpurī as its capital. This was the Kingdom of Lomapāda in Rāmāyaṇa period and of Karṇa in Mahābhārata time.[10] The elephants of this king are said to be trained by great sages in a highly scientific and efficient manner. It is significant that in the conquests of Raghu Aṅga is not included.

AVANTI: This country represented the tract of which Ujjayinī was the capital wherein the famous Mahākāla temple is situate. Avanti was later on (about 6th century A.D.) called Malwa. Living as the king of this country did in the vicinity of Candramauli (Mahākāla), the poet remarks, he continuously enjoyed moonlight even during the dark half (कृष्णपक्ष) of the month.

ANŪPA: This principality must have included parts of Aurangabad and Mhow, south of Malwa, being the southern part of Central India through which the Narmadā flows. This country was coterminous with Avanti. Its capital was Māhiṣmatī, the modern Maheshvar. Its king was the descendant of Kārtavīrya or Haihaya, a contemporary of Rāma and Rāvaṇa. Note the absurd anachronism. A descendant of Kārtavīrya could hardly have lived at the time of Rāma's grandfather Aja! This wanton disregard of chronology is abundantly noticeable in the works of Kālidāsa. Thus Duṣyanta's capital is said to be Hastināpura

9. Nandlal Dey.
10. Nandlal Dey.

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which was founded by one of his descendants at a much later date. The king of Anūpa is stated to be the only king who having propitiated the God of Fire defied the might of Paraśurāma. This is also an obvious confusion of dates for Paraśurāma though senior in age to Rāma was his contemporary (see end of Canto XI of *Raghuvaṁśa*).

ŚŪRASENA JANAPADA: Thereafter Sunandā takes the princess to Suṣeṇa, the king of the Śūrasena people. He is the king of Mathurā which is located on the bank of the Jumna (Kālindī) river whose dark waters became whitish due to the bathing of the ladies of this king's harem and thereby created an illusion of its confluence with the Ganges. There is also mention of Kāliya the giant serpent, Vṛndāvana and Govardhana the mountain.

The main difficulty in this connection is the statement appearing in *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 28 that Śatrughna after killing Lavaṇa founded the city of Mathurā on the bank of the Kālindī river. Are this newly founded Mathurā and the one referred to in Canto VI the same? In v. 36 of Canto XV Śatrughna is mentioned to have installed his son Śatrughātin as the king of Mathurā. Mathurā at the time of Kṛiṇa was ruled by Kṛṣṇa's grandfather Ugreasena, from whom it was usurped by his son Kaṁsa whom Kṛṣṇa killed and reinstated Ugrasena on the throne. Kṛṣṇa also was called Śauri, i.e., belonging to the Śūrasena clan. Was this clan the direct descendant of Śatrughātin the son of Śatrughna? If so, Kṛṣṇa also may be said to be a descendant of the Raghu race to which Rāma, i.e., the previous Avatāra, belonged. The question which immediately confronts us is whether the Śūrasena dynasty was holding away over Mathurā at the time of Aja.

KALIṄGANĀTHA: The next king described is that of Kaliṅga. We have already referred to this tract on page 405 in connection with Raghu's campaign. He is stated to be the lord of the Mahendra mountain and of the ocean and possessed of many elephants. In v. 40 of Canto IV he is referred to as गजसाधनः. He resided near the seashore and

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was therefore awakened from sleep in the early morning by the booming sound of the ocean waves, was soothed by the murmuring sound of the forest of palms and enjoyed the breezes impregnated by the fragrance of लवङ्ग flowers.

PĀṆḌYA: Pāṇḍya (पाण्ड्नां जनपदानां राजा) was the next king described by Sunandā. Being a resident of the hot tracts of southern India he is described as इन्दीवरश्याम, i.e., of a bluish dark colour. His body is besmeared with Haricandana, the special product of his part of the country. He also wears a resplendent string of pearls presumably procured from the Tāmraparṇī river which flows in his territories. He is said to be the Lord of the South (v. 64) where the Malaya mountain is full of betel creepers winding themselves round about betel-nut trees.

During the Mahābhārata war Śalya was said to be the king of Madradeśa which approximately covered the territories of the Pāṇḍya kings. It is not definitely known whether he was a scion of the Pāṇḍya dynasty. It is highly doubtful, however, whether in Aja's time there were any Aryan or semi-Aryan kings in southern India.

IKṢVĀKU KINGS: The last dynasty mentioned by Sunandā was of Aja who belonged to the Ikṣvaku line of kings. Sunandā refers to Kakutstha the progenitor of the Raghu race who at one time having mounted Indra in the form of a bull defeated the Rākṣasas. She also refers to Dilīpa who performed ninetynine sacrifices (one less than those performed by Indra) and to Raghu who celebrated the Viśvajit sacrifice. Uttara-kosala was the kingdom of Raghu and his successors. It was roughly the same as Oudh with its capital at Ayodhyā or Sāketa.[11]

VIDARBHA: Vidarbha is the birth-place of the princess Indumatī and the scene of her Svayaṁvara. The Vidarbha of *Raghuvaṁśa* represents the kingdom of the Bhojakaṭas. It is the modern Berar and at the time included Khandesh, part of Nizam's territory and part of the Central Provinces.

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11. *India in Kālidāsa* by Upadhyaya, p. 65.

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Its capital Kundanapur is still known by that name and is 40 miles east of Amravati in Berar.[12]

There is very little doubt that the conquest of India was completed and consolidated by Rāmacandra and his brothers, the heroes of *Rāmāyaṇa*. Before that time southern India was almost entirely under the sway of the aboriginal tribes. The so-called monkeys Rāma found helpful and friendly, while the Rākṣasas were ever hostile to the Aryan invaders and disputed the suzerainty of India with them for a considerable time. By killing the powerful Vāli and re-instating Sugrīva in his place at Kiṣkindhā Rama won over the monkeys to his side. By the conquest of Dandakāraṇya, Janasthāna and later on of Laṅkā, the most powerful stronghold of Rākṣasa power, Rama freed India from the tyranny of the Rākṣasas. The defeat and death of Lavaṇa, the ruler of Mathurā or Madhūpaghna, was an achievement in the same direction.

After the defeat and death of Rāvaṇa, Rāma left Laṅkā by the Puṣpaka airship of Kubera to return to Ayodhyā after an exile of fourteen years, and he describes for Sītā's benefit the important places and landmarks which they had to traverse on their way to Ayodhyā. He points to the Indian Ocean which was divided by the bridge constructed by him from the Malaya mountain right up to Laṅkā. This vast receptacle of water covered with foam, with the bridge dividing it in the middle, the poet aptly compares to the limitless sky bespangled with stars and divided in the middle by the milky way. Rāma dilates on the importance and the greatness of the ocean in vv. 3-9. The ocean, he says, is the generator of rain clouds and the great receptacle wherein all the rivers discharge their water; it is the bed on which God Viṣṇu sleeps during his *yogasamādhi* when the universe is withdrawn and absorbed in his body; it is the refuge which has received within its vast bosom the mountains which sought shelter therein from the mighty Indra bent upon clipping their wings.

Then he notices from a great distance the dark blue

12. *India in Kālidāsa* by Upadhyaya, p. 67.

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shore of the ocean covered with Tamāla and palm trees. Thereafter the airship reaches the seashore which is strewn with pearl-shells and is densely covered with betel-nut trees laden with fruits.

Thereafter they reach Janasthāna the territory round about Aurangabad at the sight of which place past painful memories associated with Sītā's enforced separation from him upsurged in Rāma's mind and momentarily overwhelmed him, although he was then happily re-united with her—Janasthāna which at one time was the favourite haunt of Rākṣasas. Having been freed from their fearful oppression by the valour of Rāma the ascetics who had left its cool and shady glades in terror, had returned there and were re-building their huts on the old familiar sites. Then the mountain Mālyavat is sighted where Rāma had spent some time in a love-lorn condition after the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa.

Mālyavat is identified by Nandlal Dey with the Anagundi hill on the bank of the Tungabhadra where Rāma is said to have resided for four months after his alliance with Sugrīva. Mālyavat and Praśravaṇa are considered to be one and the same.

Thereafter the Pampā lake emerges in view. Pampā lake, according to Dr. Wilson, is situated in the district of Bellari. north of the town of Humpi and close to a river of that name.

Pañcavaṭī is the next place reached. The place is generally identified with the outskirts of Nasik. Rāma in the course of his exile is stated to have spent some happy days of his life in company with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa in that place.

The Pañcāpsaras lake with its subaquarian palace of the sage Śātakarṇi cannot now be identified. It must have been somewhere near Pañcavaṭī. Janasthāna, Pañcavaṭī, Agastyāśrama must be located in the forest tracts watered by the Godāvarī river, which had been just then emancipated from the thraldom of the Rākṣasas and must have been the favourite resort of sages and ascetics who found

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its fertility, solitude and good climate congenial to their sequestered, spiritual and contemplative life.

Thereafter the poet refers to Citrakūṭa (also known as Rāmagiri) which owing to its deep caverns, constant roar of falling waters, and overhanging clouds, attracted the eye like a powerful and high-spirited bull whose horns were bespattered with mud. Citrakūṭa has also been mentioned in v. 15 of Canto XII. This hill appears to be in or near the Daṇḍakāraṇya tract which may be said to roughly extend from the mountain chain of the Vindhyas to the region of the Godāvarī. Mandākinī as Mallinātha says is a river flowing near about the Citrakūṭa hill. Śyāmavaṭa is another esteemed landmark to which Rāma makes a loving reference. This giant tree has been referred to in *Rāmāyaṇa* also, as an object of veneration owing to its vast expanse and great age.

Then comes the glowing and rapturous description of the confluence of the Ganges with the Jumna near Prayag, the exuberance of which cannot but remind the reader of Bāṇabhatta's fulsome and expansive style. Niṣādapura or Śṛṅgaverapura is next noticed, which place must have been on the outskirts of the Ayodhyā city, the final destination of the airship. The river Śarayū is spoken of by Rāma as his revered mother.

Comparing the great distance covered by the airship from Ceylon to Ayodhyā it is surprising that so few places have been noticed by the poet in Canto XIII. This shows that his acquaintance with the southern half of India was somewhat meagre and sketchy. The last geographical references occur in Cantos XV and XVI of *Raghuvaṁśa*. Rāma had two sons Kuśa and Lava; Lakṣmaṇa had two sons Aṅgada and Candraketu; Bharata had two sons Takṣa and Púṣkala; and Śatrughna had two sons Śatrughātin and Subāhu.

The wise brothers, i.e., Rāma and others, when they thought that their end was nearing, decided to establish their progeny independently and at different places with a view to avoid family feuds after their demise.

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The country to the south of the upper Indus or the province of Takṣaśilā was divided between Bharata's two sons Takṣa and Puṣkala, and Takṣaśilā and Puṣkalāvatī their respective capitals were named after them. This was called Sindhudeśa where Bharata had vanquished the Gandharvas who held sway in that region at the time.

Aṅgada and Candraketu were made the lords of Kārāpatha, a country which is not identified with any definiteness. Nandlal Dey mentions it as Karabagh on the Indus. Wilson locates Kārāpatha at the foot of the Himalayas. The country is sometimes mentioned as Karupatha. The modern Shahabad in Oudh is also named Aṅgadapuri after Aṅgada, one of the sons of Lakṣmaṇa. Prof. Upadhyaya thinks Chandpur east of Sarangpur is called after Candraketu.

Śatrughātin and Subāhu, the two sons of Śatrughna, were settled at Mathurā and Vidiśā. The former town is on the banks of the Jumna and still called by that name. Mathurā was built by Śatrughna after he killed the demon Lavaṇa and destroyed his city Madhūpaghna (now identified with Māhuli). Vidiśā is the modern Bhilsa on the river Betwa in the Gwalior State.

Rāma settled Kuśa in Kuśāvatī and Lava in Śarāvatī. Kuśāvatī it appears was situate in the defiles of the Vindhya mountain as Kuśa had to cross the Vindhya and the Ganges to re-inhabit the old capital Ayodhyā. Śarāvatī is not clearly identified as yet.

We next turn to Canto XVI wherein is described the journey of Kuśa to Ayodhyā from Kuśāvatī. On the way to Ayodhyā Kuśa's army was divided into numerous camps and dispersed among the flanks of the Vindhyas and had to cross the Ganges flowing westward with the aid of a bridge formed of elephants. This route has enabled the scholars to ascertain the position of Kuśāvatī which must be situated in the defiles of the Vindhyas.

Naimiṣa forest referred to in *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 1 is said to be at a short distance from Nigasāra station 45 miles to the north-west of Lucknow.

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After *Raghuvaṁśa* where geographical references are most numerous, we have to deal with *Meghadūta*, Kālidāsa's lyrical masterpiece, wherein he describes in colourful phrases the various cities, mountains and rivers which the cloud messenger is to take on his way from Rāmaṭeka to Alakā. It is somewhat difficult to understand why the poet should have made Rāmagiri the starting point of the cloud's itinerary. This hill the poet describes as full of Niculas, i.e., aquatic plants of the same species as reeds or canes. This Rāmagiri is very probably the Citrakūṭa hill (see p. 415) which was well-known in ancient times and was considered worthy of religious pilgrimage.

The next reference is to Mālabhūmi or Mālakṣetra. Wilson thinks that this is meant to convey the town of Malada. Some think it is Yeotmal. From the context however is indicated a large fertile plateau just brought under the plough and therefore emitting that unforgettable sweet fragrance from the turned up soil after the first rainfall. Leaving behind Mālabhūmi the cloud by a somewhat tortuous course reaches Āmrakūṭa or Amarakaṇṭaka, a hill to the east of the Vindhya mountains where the river Narmadā takes its rise. The flanks of the Āmrakūṭa hill are covered by mango forests which in the month of Āṣādha (May and June) are overladen with yellow ripe fruits and thus the hill presents the lovely appearance of a breast of the earth (personified as a female), being of yellow colour all around and of bluish dark colour at the top due to the cloud temporarily resting on its summit.

Revā or Narmadā which has its source on the Āmrakūṭa hill flows through the rocky ledges of the Vindhya mountain which is fancied by the poet to be an immense black elephant on whose body the rapidly flowing boisterous and obstructed current of the Narmadā shows off as a floral decoration or ornamental design. Thereafter the cloud passes on to the Daśārṇa region which is supposed to be the modern Chattisgad by some and the Bhilsa territory by others. It appears that the poet has used the word "Caitya" in v. 23 with a deliberate object. Instead

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of "Grāmacaityas" he could have as well used the expression "Grāmavṛkṣas". Caitya means (1) big sacred trees like the Vaṭa and the Pimpaḷa and (2) Buddhavihāras. The poet may have intended to convey that in the Daśārṇa territory, round about Malwa, the Buddhist monasteries had become tenantless and were crumbling down to decay and hence were full of crows' nests. If Kālidāsa is supposed to have lived about the middle of the 2nd century B. C. the tract to which the poet is referring was under the suzerainty of Puṣpamitra of the Śuṅga dynasty who was a Brahmin and an avowed and inveterate enemy of Buddhism and a destroyer of Buddhist monasteries. Kālidāsa, although a devout Hindu and perhaps a Śaivite, was far from being a religious fanatic or bigot and may not have liked the open and merciless persecution of an innocent religious community and therefore must have dealt out this veiled taunt against Puṣpamitra.

Thereafter Vidiśā is reached which is located on the banks of the Vetravatī or Betwa river. This city was the capital of Agnimitra, the viceroy designate of his father Puṣpamitra. It was in this city that the first dramatic production of Kālidāsa's *Mālavikāgnimitra* was probably first staged. The poet advises the cloud to imbibe the sweet water of the Betwa as if it were the nectar from her beautiful and amorously cooing mouth !

The cloud meets the Nīcaiḥgiri, a mountain near Vidiśā, which is otherwise called Vāmanagiri whose caverns and caves were the pleasure-haunts of the lusty and full-blooded youth of Vidiśā.

With a little deviation from the straight course, the cloud has the inestimable privilege of enjoying the rare sight of the splendid palaces of Ujjayinī, full of beautiful ladies.

On the way to Ujjain he comes across Nirvindhyā river which is lean and love-lorn and is impatiently awaiting the advent of the lucky cloud who is advised by the poet to ingratiate himself into the mysteries of her charms, to relieve her sufferings and restore her to her original form.

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Thereafter vv. 30-38 are devoted to the description of Ujjayinī which the poet affectionately fancies to be a portion of स्वर्ग itself brought to earth by pious persons on the strength of the remnant of their meritorious acts, where the cool and invigorating breezes of the Śiprā river (on whose bank Ujjayinī is situate) spur on lovers to fresh sexual efforts, where the abundant fragrant smoke of sweet incense is likely to add to the bulk of the cloud, where the joyous welcoming dance of the peacocks will greet his arrival and where his eyes will be blessed by looking at the lovely coloured foot-prints of young women on the shining marble floors of its palaces.

Having enjoyed the sweet smelling breezes of the gardens on the bank of the river Gandhavatī, a small tributary of Śiprā, the cloud reaches the Holy of Holies, the Mahākāla temple of Śiva, and is admonished not to leave the temple without performing the evening service of beating the drums by means of his reverberating thunder, and by spreading himself on the forest of tall trees there, taking on the red colour of the blooming Japā flower, and thus creating a momentary illusion of the blood-oozing skin of a freshly killed elephant on the upraised arms of Śiva at the time of his ताण्डव dance. The poet further remarks that Ujjayinī is a city of pleasure-loving women and admonishes him not to frighten young passion-laden girls proceeding to their love assignations by loud thunders but courteously and obligingly show them their way on a pitch dark night by timely flashes of lightning.

That the poet has devoted seven or eight verses to the description of Ujjayinī is taken as indicative of his intimate association with and abiding affection for that city. Many think that this prince of poets must have spent some happy years of his life in or about this place.

Gambhīrā river is next sighted and the poet indulges in one of his fanciful stunts wherein the river is imagined as an amorous young woman and the cloud the impetuous lover who forcibly disrobes her by removing the remnant of her loose garment from her thighs. Her hands are

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supposed to be cane plants clutching at the shallow receding water at the extreme end of her banks, fancied by the poet to be the skirts of her dishevelled garment, and her banks are compared to her thighs. The imagery though very beautiful appears somewhat far-strained. The idea is reproduced elsewhere by the poet with some modifications.[13]

The mountain Devagiri on which exists the temple of Kārtikeya, Wilson locates in the centre of the province of Malwa. Devagiri has been placed by Kālidāsa between Ujjayinī and Mandsor near the Chambal river. This mountain is mentioned in connection with the Udumbara trees in v. 42 of *Pūrva-Megha*. After doing homage to Guha the cloud proceeds to that perpetual memorial of the generosity and hospitality of the great king Rantideva, the Lord of Daśapura, the river Carmaṇvatī (or Chambal) which is said to have come into existence from the copious flow of blood from the oozing hides of thousands of kine killed by that king every day for feeding pious guests. It is said that he killed about 2000 cattle every day to feed Brahmins. Thereafter the cloud who is of a bluish dark colour like the body of Lord Kṛṣṇa, is imagined to come down to imbibe the sparkling pure water of the Chambal river and thus to create the appearance of a large bluish Indranīla jewel in the middle of a beautiful pearl necklace.

Crossing over Carmaṇvatī the cloud cannot escape being made the loving target of the eyes of the beautiful ladies of the city of Daśapura (which is taken to be modern Mandsor).

Brahmāvarta, the tract between Sarasvatī and Dṛśadvatī rivers, is next visited and Kurukṣetra, the site of the great Mahābhārata war, is reached soon thereafter.

As to his next halt, he is earnestly advised by the Yakṣa to contact the holy waters of the Sarasvatī which are so ineffably sweet that a life-long boozer and wine addict like Balarāma (the brother of the great Kṛṣṇa) having tasted them willingly gave up his indulgence in wine.

13. *Vikramorvaśīya* IV. 52.

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Crossing the Kanakhala, a village located on the western bank of the Ganges near Haridvāra, the cloud has to traverse the holy Ganges, whom the god Śiva has honoured by placing her in the midst of his matted hair.

The majestic Himalayan range is the next halt on the way where the imprints of the feet of Śaṅkara receive the veneration due to them from the wandering cloud. This place is popularly called हर की पायरी, i.e., feet imprint of Hara, and is near Haradvāra.

The next landmark is Krauñcarandhra, i.e., the passage cut through by Paraśurāma by his arrow in the Krauñca mountain. This is now called Nīti pass, or the road to the Mānasa lake, and has also to be negotiated when travelling to Tibet from India.

The dark cloud hanging over the Kailāsa peak which is pure white like the newly cut-out tusk of a young elephant will create the illusion of the fair Haladhara (Balarāma) wearing a dark garment on the upper portion of his body.

There i.e. on the Kailāsa peak, the cloud may have the golden opportunity of serving the supreme god Śaṅkara in case he happens to be moving about there with Gaurī his wife, by improvising a staircase by means of his body (as he is endowed with the power to assume any form at will, he being *kāmarūpa*) so that the divine couple may pass over him in climbing to a higher level.

As the last stage the cloud reaches Alakā, the capital of Kubera, the king of the Yakṣas. Here his interesting journey comes to an end.

In the *Uttara-Megha* there are hardly any geographical references. The first eleven verses in *Uttara-Megha* are devoted to the description of the fabled city of *Alakā*, vv. 12-18 contain the description of the Yakṣa's dwelling place, vv. 19-33 the description of the Yakṣa's wife and thereafter comes the message of the Yakṣa to his forlorn wife (vv. 36-52).

The entire lay-out of *Kumārasambhava* is mostly on a celestial and ethereal plane and therefore geographical references are hardly to be met with.

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The reference to Himālaya in *Kumārasambhava* I. 1 is not geographically correct.[14] The mountain is described as dipping its eastern and western flanks respectively in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. Himālaya dipping its western end in the Arabian Sea is a poetical fiction, as the distance of that end from the Arabian Sea is considerable. So also in v. 16 of Canto I the description of the sun awakening the lotus-buds in the lakes located on the highest peaks of the Himalayas by his upward shooting rays, while traversing his usual course from a lower height, is also a highly fanciful and exaggerated compliment paid to that prince of the mountains. It is not definitely known what peak of the Himalayas is indicated by Gaurīśikhara where Pārvatī is said to have practised her penance. महाकोशीप्रपात referred to in *Kumārasambhava* VI. 33 and गंगाप्रपात referred to in *Raghuvaṁśa* II. 26 also are difficult to trace and identify. Mahākośī is the combined stream made by the merger of the seven Kośīs of Nepal.

Oṣadhiprastha described in vv. 37-46 of Canto VI is an imaginary place like Alakā in *Meghadūta* and is almost similarly described. Meru (VIII. 22), Mandāra (VIII. 23), Kailāsa (VIII. 24), Gandhamādana (VIII. 28), are all summits, real or fictitious, of the Himālaya and are considered to be the abodes of divine and semi-divine beings.

Amarāvatī (XIII. 35) is the mythical capital of God Indra.

There are a few geographical references in *Śākuntala*. Kaṇvāśrama is supposed to be near Bijnor, north-east of the old city of Hastināpura the capital of the Kurus. Hastināpura, which is now entirely diluviated by the Ganges, was situated 22 miles from Meerut (north-east) on the right bank of the Ganges. Hastināpura as such did not exist at the time of Duṣyanta, having been founded by Hastin who lived several generations after him. Somatīrtha where Kaṇva is said to have gone to propitiate the evil stars of

14. *Kumārasambhava* I. 1:

पूर्वापरौ तोयनिधी वगाह्य स्थितः पृथिव्या इव मानदण्डः ।

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Śakuntalā is said to be a place of pilgrimage near about Kurukṣetra.

The river Mālinī must have been near Kaṇvāśrama or Bijnor. Hemakūṭa mentioned in Act VII of *Śākuntala* and Act I of *Vikramorvaśīya* is a fictitious mountain peak where Kimpuruṣas, a class of semi-divine beings, dwell. Pratiṣṭhāna is modern Jhansi opposite to Allahabad across the Ganges; this was the capital of Purūravas, and is referred to in Act II of *Vikramorvaśīya*. It is stated to be situated at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna.

The location of Cyavanāśrama referred to in Act V of *Vikramorvaśīya* is not definitely known. It must have been within easy reach of Pratiṣṭhāna.

The plot of the play *Mālavikāgnimitra* is laid in Vidiśā which as stated before is identified with Bhilsa a town on the bank of the river Betwa in Gwalior State. Vidiśā was the capital of the western Daśārṇa which is roughly identified as Malwa. Vidiśā is 26 miles to the north-west of Bhopal.

In Act I of *Mālavikāgnimitra* Vidarbha (Berar) is mentioned, where an internecine feud between two cousins of the royal family brought about the intercession of Agnimitra, who exerted his influence and power to release Mādhavasena the brother of Mālavikā from the captivity of the latter's cousin Yajñasena, usurper of the throne of Vidarbha. As Yajñasena was not amenable to the mandate of Agnimitra, he orders his general Vīrasena to attack and subjugate him in the 1st Act. Afterwards in the 5th Act the king issues an order that the Vidarbha territory should be divided into two portions by the dividing line of the Varadā river and Yajñasena should be assigned the northern portion and Mādhavasena should be installed as the ruler of the southern portion. Varadā is the Wardha river in the Central Provinces and is a tributary of Godāvarī. Kālidāsa's references to these episodes, as if they were of recent date at his time, are considered significant on the question of his date.

In Act V, Vasumitra the son of Agnimitra is stated to

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have been attacked when in charge of the sacrificial horse of his grandfather by certain Yavanas whose army consisted mainly of horsemen, on the southern bank of the river Sindhu. Who these Yavanas were is not clear. As in *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 62, the Persians are described as Aśva-sādhanas, this attacking force may have been an advance column of the Persian army with whom the prince came in conflict.

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CHAPTER XXI

WAR AND WEAPONS

Kālidāsa does not appear to be a master hand in dealing with the martial sentiment (वीररस). His descriptions of war-like episodes lack the vigour and picturesqueness of Bhavabhūti. Even Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa in *Veṇīsaṁhāra* is more impressive in the description of war scenes. Kālidāsa's descriptions of warfare in Cantos III, VII, XII of *Raghuvaṁśa* and in Cantos XVI and XVII of *Kumārasambhava* are at times tedious and often lifeless. Possibly the Vaidarbhī style of his composition is not quite suited for the expression or forceful representation of the martial sentiment (वीररस) as does the Gauḍī which is used by Bhavabhūti or Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa. The harsh high-sounding effect of the latter style is in consonance with the spirit of warfare, havoc and destruction.

War there has been, in some form or other, since the birth of the human race. Among lower animals also the fighting instinct is dominant and all-pervading; and whatever the apostles of peace and Ahiṁsā (abstinence from hurting any living thing) like Mahavīra, Buddha and their henchmen like Mahatma Gandhi may preach to the contrary, martial instinct being a fundamental law of nature, war cannot be totally eliminated from the scheme of human life. War and disease are two powerful weapons which keep down and limit the growth of the ever-increasing population. The only way to end war is a complete reorientation of human life in such a way that population being kept down within strict economic limits and thereby food and space becoming ample for everybody, the main incentive for clash, conflict and insane desperate rivalry is completely removed. In such an atmosphere the general level of man's integrity and benevolence may rise and put

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an effective break on his inborn ferocity and selfishness.

Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya, *Nītiprakāśikā* of Vaiśaṁpāyana, *Śukranītisāra* and *Kāmandakanītisāra* deal mostly with administration and war. Vaiśaṁpāyana furnishes a scientific classification of the weapons of his time.

The weapons were classified as follows: (1) मुक्त, i.e., thrown, (2) अमुक्त, i.e., not thrown, (3) मन्त्रमुक्त, i.e., discharged by the operation of मन्त्रs. The last belongs to the class of "Secret Weapons". The weapons to which reference is made in Kālidāsa's writings are as follows:

The first and foremost is the bow and arrows. The bow was fashioned out of rattan (bamboo), also ताल (palmyra), or a kind of palm tree wood with a smooth surface, दारु (wood), शृङ्ग (horn), and the bow-string was made of मूर्वा (मूर्वा, मूर्विका) a creeper which was also used for making girdles for Kṣatriyas. The bow-string was also made of स्नायु (muscle), hemp etc. There is no doubt that archery in ancient India had reached a high level of efficiency. Chariots were mostly two-wheeled vehicles open to the sky with accommodation for two persons only, viz., the warrior inside and the charioteer at the front. The charioteer's seat was on a lower level as compared to that of the warrior. Two or sometimes four horses were yoked to a chariot. Atirathins and Mahārathins like Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Arjuna, Karṇa were hosts in themselves and by their arrows caused havoc and routed large armies. Arjuna discharged arrows with both hands, hence he was called सव्यसाचिन्, i.e., one who used the left hand also with equal efficacy. Sometimes the skill of an archer was so great that the bow-string itself appeared to pour forth a shower of arrows.[1] Sometimes bows of great warriors were so heavy that it required a number of men to move them.[2]

Sometimes the arrows of distinguished persons were

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1. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 57:
आकर्णकृष्टा सकृदस्य योद्धुर्मौर्वीव बाणान्सुषुवे रिपुघ्नान्।

2. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 43:
व्यादिदेश गणशोऽथ पार्श्वगान्कार्मुकाभिहरणाय मैथिलः।

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inscribed with their names.[3]

Arrows were of different kinds and therefore named differently. पत्रिन् was an arrow whose rear part was fashioned like a bird's feather, probably to increase its speed.[4] आशुग was an arrow known for its great velocity.[5] सायक was another name for an arrow.[6] A पत्रिन् arrow when flying in the sky looked like a winged serpent. बाण was the standard name for an arrow.[7] It is not known whether पृषत्कs were arrows of any special kind.[8] शर was another usual name.[9] शिलीमुख was probably an arrow with a crescent-like front.[10] भल्ल was used for cutting off the heads of the enemies.[11] अर्धचन्द्र was an arrow with its front portion like the half-moon.[12] इषु[13], विशिख[14], नाराच[15], क्षुरप्र[16], were also other names for arrows.

Similarly the bow also was variously named as कोदण्ड[17], शार्ङ्ग[18], शरासन[19], चाप[20], धनुस्[21], कार्मुक[22].

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3. *Kumārasambhava* XVII. 4 :
   तान्प्रज्वलत्फलमुखैर्विषमैः सुरारिनामाङ्कितैः पिहितदिग्गगनान्तरालैः ।
   Vikramorvaśīya V. 7:
   उर्वशीसंभवस्यायमैलसूनोर्धनुष्मतः ।
   कुमारस्यायुषो बाणः संहर्ता द्विषदायुषाम् ॥
4. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 53.
5. ,, III. 54.
6. ,, III. 55.
7. ,, VII. 57.
8. ,, VII. 45.
9. *Kumārasambhava* XVII. 4.
10. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 49.
11. ,, VII. 58.
    ,, IV. 63.
12. *Kumārasambhava* XVI. 49.
13. *Vikramorvaśīya* II. 10.
14. *Kumārasambhava* XVII. 19.
15. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 41.
16. *Kumārasambhava* XVII. 46.
17. *Mālavikāgnimitra* V. 10.
18. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 62.
19. *Śākuntala* VI. 29.
20. *Raghuvaṁśa* XII. 44.
21. *Śākuntala* VI. 32.
22. *Raghuvaṁśa* XI. 47.

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This shows of what vast importance archery was in ancient India.

There are numerous other weapons used in warfare at that time. क्षेपणीय is referred to in *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 77. Mallināṭha gives भिन्दिपाल as another name for it. Very probably it means a sling for throwing stones as it was, and still is, much in use among the uncivilized mountaineers or foresters (पर्वतीय गण[S]). चक्र was a disc having four, six or eight spokes.[23] This belongs to the मुक्त class.

असि[24], खड्ग[25], करवाल[26], these were the various names of a sword which was a favourite weapon in hand-to-hand fight.

गदा[27], i.e., a mace, was another powerful destructive weapon used in hand-to-hand fight. Mace-fighting required great skill and was subject to intricate rules. In *Mahābhārata* Bhīma and Duryodhana were the great exponents of गदायुद्ध. परिघ[28], a kind of battering ram, was fashioned of strong wood studded with nails मुद्गर[29] was somewhat like a hammer. लगुड was a kind of club, two cubits in length, and मुसल a kind of pestle. शतघ्नी[30] (लोहकण्टककीलितयष्टिविशेष, says Mallināṭha), was a destructive projectile of great force. It is interpreted as a cannon capable of killing a hundred people. It is also defined as अयःकण्टकसंछन्ना शतघ्नी महती शिला. The exact nature of this terrible weapon is not known. नालीक was a hand-gun.

कुन्त[31] was a barbed dart or a lance (Apte's Sanskrit-English dictionary). प्रास[32] was probably the modern spear (प्र+अस्, to throw).

शक्ति[33] was a dagger or a small sword used in close

23. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 46.
24. ,, VII. 48.
25. ,, VII. 51.
26. *Kumārasambhava* XVII. 48.
27. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 52.
28. ,, XII. 73.
29. ,, XII. 73.
30. ,, XII. 95.
31. *Kumārasambhava* XVI. 16.
32. ,, XVI. 29, 41, 42
33. ,, XVI. 45.

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hand-to-hand fight. वज्र[34], the peculiar weapon of Indra called thunderbolt, was well-known from the Vedic period. Hence Indra is named वज्रिन्[35]. शूल[36] is a lance.

पिनाक or त्रिशूल, the trident, was the weapon of Śiva, hence he is styled पिनाकिन्[37]. पिनाक is also the name of परशु or battle-axe which was the famous weapon of Paraśurāma whose name itself was derived from his "Paraśu".

Some construe नाराच[38] as नलिक, i.e., a hand-gun. Mallinātha however explains the word as बाणविशेष.

Movable military machines were of different kinds but they find no reference in Kālidāsa's works.

The अस्त्रs were missiles of tremendous power set in motion by the appropriate मन्त्रs which were kept very secret and passed by mouth to a very few trusted and high-born warriors. In course of time, therefore, especially after the thinning out of the Kṣatriya race due to the Mahābhārata war, their knowledge became gradually extinct. ब्रह्मास्त्र from its very description appears to be somewhat like a powerful atom bomb or hydrogen bomb. The great secrecy with which these अस्त्रs were kept and the fact that few chosen persons were thought eligible for being initiated into their mysteries, was mainly responsible for their total disappearance. There seems little doubt however that they were in vogue during the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata period, and like विमानs or aeroplanes, they may perhaps be rediscovered at some future time.

We have dealt with in detail with the अस्त्रs elsewhere.

Kauṭilya speaks of a cart named सर्वतोभद्र capable of rapid revolution in all directions and hurtling murderous stones all around. Jāmadagnya and Mahāsārayantra were so fashioned that arrows could be discharged from it on all sides. बहुमुख was a tower-like moving construction with archers inside who kept on discharging arrows. पर्जन्यक was a very powerful water-machine whose use threw the

34. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 60.
35. *Vikramorvaśīya* I. 17.
36. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 5, 17.
37. „ VI. 72.
38. „ IV. 41.

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hostile hordes into disorder and confusion. The above-mentioned engines of war however find no reference in the writings of Kālidāsa and may perhaps be later inventions.

The ancient Indian warfare was governed by principles of righteousness and humanity and warriors were lenient to a fault in their treatment of the vanquished.

Elephants were used on a large scale in warfare. Raghu's conquering army was equipped with a large number of powerful elephants.[39] Elephants were often used for improvising bridges over unfordable rivers.[40] Raghu in his irresistible march had to cross the Kapiśā river on his way, by forming a bridge of these huge animals. The king of Kaliṅga country joined issues with Raghu assisted by his vast assemblage of elephants. He is referred to as गजसाधन. It is said that Raghu's army which emitted the strong odour of elephants' ruttings having surrounded the Kāverī river, made her husband (the ocean) suspicious of her chastity and fidelity.[41] In Assam (कामरूप), the king of that country presented many excellent elephants to Raghu. Elephants were used as powerful frontal-line defence against an attacking enemy. There are many references to elephants in *Raghuvaṁśa*.[42] The army elephants were not as a rule used for trampling under foot the soldiers of the hostile army, but often in their hurried and disorderly stampede, having been hard hit with missiles, they sometimes ran riot and worked havoc among foot-soldiers. It is well-known that in the memorable battle of Alexander with Porus the elephants of the latter king, having been wounded by javelins thrown by Alexander's soldiery, turned round and

39. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 23 :
प्रसवैः सप्तपर्णानां मदगन्धिभिराहताः ।
असूययेव तन्नागाः सप्तधैव प्रसुस्रुवुः ॥
40. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 38 :
स तीर्त्वा कपिशां सैन्यैर्बद्धद्विरदसेतुभिः ।
41. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 45:
स सैन्यपरिभोगेण गजदानसुगन्धिना ।
कावेरीं सरितां पत्युः शङ्कनीयामिवाकरोत् ॥
42. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 47, 59 ,76.

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trampled under foot their own army and thus secured an easy victory for Alexander.

There were four well-recognized divisions of the army: रथारूढ, गजारूढ, अश्वारूढ and पदाति. Horsemen were mostly used for the purpose of attack. It was a general rule that soldiers belonging to the same class joined issue with one another. A गजारूढ or an अश्वारूढ usually never fought with a पदाति.[43]

It was not the custom in those days to hit an adversary who had fainted or become disabled.[44]

It was the general belief that a warrior killed in fight went straight to heaven as a matter of course.

The most wonderful custom connected with warfare was the free and safe movement among the fighting and hostile armies of bards acquainted with the family history of distinguished warriors in the opposing armies, who in a loud voice proclaimed their genealogy and past exploits with a view to goad them to greater efforts.[45]

भेरी[46], the drum, and तूर्या[47], a horn-like musical instrument making a shrill and far-reaching sound, were used in warfare in the same way as the military bands are used at the present times.

The कवच or armour was usually used by fighters. It was also termed कङ्कट.[48] It was padded inside with cotton wool so as to make it pleasant to the skin of the wearer.

43. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 37:
पत्तिः पदातिं रथिनं रथेशस्तुरंगसादी तुरगाधिरूढम् ।
यन्ता गजस्याभ्यपतद्गजस्थं तुल्यप्रतिद्वन्द्वि बभूव युद्धम् ।

44. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 47:
पूर्वं प्रहर्ता न जघान भूयः प्रतिप्रहाराक्षममश्वसादी ।
तुरङ्गमस्कन्धनिषण्णदेहं प्रत्याश्वसन्तं रिपुमाचकाङ्क्ष ॥

45. *Kumārasambhava* XVI. 3:
युद्धाय धावतां धीरं वीराणामितरेतरम् ।
वैतालिकाः कुलाधीशा नामान्यलमुदाहरन् ॥
Kumārasambhava XVI. 4; *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 38.

46. *Kumārasambhava* XIV. 27, 45, 49.

47. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 38.

48. „ VII. 59.

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When an armour was cleft asunder with sword strokes, the cotton inside was let loose to mix with the surrounding atmosphere.[49]

The रथ provided accommodation only for two, the warrior and the charioteer. As has been observed elsewhere the charioteer had a considerable share in the achievements of the warrior as, but for the former's clever management of the horses, the most formidable archer would have often found himself in difficulties and would not have been able to do full justice to his skill.

War in those times in India was not the barbarous, uncivilized affair such as it is at present. In the evening after the announcement that fighting had ceased for the day, even a woman or a child could move freely and fearlessly in the midst of the hostile armies. In this connection the proclamation of Yudhiṣṭhira in *Veṇīsaṁhāra* V. 36 should be noted. He issues an order that the fighting forces should be withdrawn from the battlefield to allow the relatives of the killed to discover their bodies and give them a decent cremation.

The opponents of both armies fought face to face and oftentimes there was a wordy war between them. Note the colloquy between Tāraka and Kumāra[50] and exchange of words between Raghu and Indra[51]. In the present machine-managed warfare it rarely happens that the soldiers of the opposing armies have even a glimpse of one another.

It is usually after the rainy reason that the kings made military preparations and essayed forth on a campaign of victory and booty when the rivers became fordable and the roads free from mud.[52]

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49. *Kumārasambhava* XVI. 6.
50. „ XVII. 13–17.
51. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 44–50.
52. „ IV. 24:

सरितः कुर्वती गाधाः पथश्चाश्यानकर्दमान् ।
यात्रायै चोदयामास तं शक्तेः प्रथमं शरत् ॥

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There does not appear any regular discipline or order in the army. Reliance was placed on mere numerical strength and personal valour and skill. The greater and mightier the army the louder the din and noise occasioned by it. The dust raised by a large army was observable miles around. The greater part of the description of an army marching forward or engaged in battle consists of an awful picture of vast chaos, uproar and blinding and suffocating dust.[53]

Boats and ships were used for the purpose of warfare. This was the beginning of the modern navy.[54]

53. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 29 and 82; *Kumārasambhava* XIV. 16-24.
54. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 36.

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CHAPTER XXII

ASTROLOGY AND ASTRONOMY

Astrology, a pseudo-science which bespeaks of the influence of stars and planets on the tenor of human life and pretends to foretell its future course, has had a very tenacious hold on the popular mind in India and elsewhere. The theory that the far distant planets and conjunctions of stars rule and regulate human destiny, it will be readily conceded, is highly disputable.

Yet high and low, educated and illiterate, male and female, almost from time immemorial are more or less under the thraldom of this ingenious fiction. An astrologer is an important person in royal palaces and a valuable and almost indispensable adviser of the poor also.

Much has been said for and against astrology and its pretensions as a science. It is said with some degree of truth that the moon in its varying digits has great influence on certain diseases especially in cases of lunacy. Similarly it is asserted that a certain constellation of stars conjoining with certain planets creates an atmosphere, favourable or unfavourable in relation to the course of life of persons born under it. To have a peep in the future is a fascinating obsession of the human mind, and it appears that for this reason an empirical method has been devised to satisfy the human craving in some measure.

A planet conjoint with certain benign constellation of stars (Rāśi) and located at a safe distance from the sun is supposed to shed a propitious influence on human life, while on the other hand a planet, too near the sun or conjoint with certain inauspicious Rāśis (constellations of stars), is either powerless or malignant in its influence. Raghu was born with five out of seven planets at a respectable distance from

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the sun and conjoint with a favourable Rāśi.[1]

There are also मुहूर्तs (auspicious or inauspicious moments) and a person born or an action undertaken on a paticular Muhūrta will fare well or ill according to its nature.[2]

The commentator interprets ब्राह्मे मुहूर्ते as ब्रह्मदेवताके अभिजिन्नामके मुहूर्ते. Aja the son of Raghu was born on such a Muhūrta.

Pārvatī was married to Śiva on the following Muhūrta. It was शुक्लपक्ष (चन्द्रस्य वृद्धौ) as no auspicious ceremony can be performed during the dark half of the month. The तिथि was जामित्रगुणान्विता. Jāmitra is explained as the seventh place from the जन्मलग्न, i.e., the planet which dominates the moment of birth otherwise called natal sign. Pārvatī was therefore married in the bright half of the month when the seventh place from her जन्मलग्न (birth planet) was free from any blemish.[3]

Jāmitra is considered identical with "Diametron" of the Greeks. Involved and ingenious speculation has been started on the strength of this supposed resemblance of the above words, viz., "Jāmitra" and "Diametron", as to whether astrology has been borrowed form the Greeks by the Indians or *vice versa*. Some savants even try to discover a clue to the date of Kālidāsa from this source.

It is considered dangerous to start on a journey when the planet Śukra is visible in front. It is said that Madana courted his own destruction when he essayed to attack Śiva with his flower arrows as if he were a traveller who

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1. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 13:
ग्रहैस्ततः पञ्चभिरुच्चसंश्रयैरसूर्यगैः सूचितभाग्यसंपदम् ।
असूत पुत्रं समये शचीसमा त्रिसाधना शक्तिरिवार्थमक्षयम् ॥

2. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 36:
ब्राह्मे मुहूर्ते किल तस्य देवी कुमारकल्पं सुषुवे कुमारम् ।

3. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 1:
अथौषधीनामधिपस्य वृद्धौ तिथौ च जामित्रगुणान्वितायाम् ।
समेतबन्धुर्हिमवान्सुताया विवाहदीक्षाविधिमन्वतिष्ठत् ॥

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started on his journey with Śukra visible in front.[4]

In *Mālavikāgnimitra* reference is made to the retrograde motion of the planet Mars (Maṅgala) which is said to turn backward in its course and move towards the constellation which it had already left behind. When it turns backward in this way its influence is stated to be positively malignant. This reference is made by Vidūṣaka with reference to Irāvatī in Act III.[5]

कलाशेषश्चन्द्रः, i.e., the moon reduced to its last digit because he has given all his nectar to the gods, is compared with Raghu who had given away everything to deserving mendicants. The full moon, like Raghu in possession of all his wealth, is not so pleasing to the sight as the moon in its last digit reduced like Raghu to utter penury after giving his all to the poor and needy.[6]

The dark spot on the moon the poet considers as the shadow of the earth on its surface. The scientists now think that dark spots on the moon are some rocky mountains on it.[7]

During the bright half of the month, the attenuated moon gradually waxes bigger and bigger because it was thought that the rays of the sun gradually enter its body.[8]

It was considered possible to placate or tone down the adverse influence of the stars by certain prescribed propitiation ceremonies.[9]

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4. *Kumārasambhava* III. 43:
दृष्टिप्रपातं परिहृत्य तस्य कामः पुरःशुक्रमिव प्रयाणे ।
प्रान्तेषु संसक्तनमेरुशाखं ध्यानास्पदं भूतपतेर्विवेश ॥
5. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act III, p. 60 :
तद्वयं शीघ्रमपक्रामामः । यावदङ्गारको राशिमिवानुवक्रं प्रतिगमनं न करोति ।
6. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 16.
7. „ XIV. 40 :
छाया हि भूमेः शशिनो मलत्वेनारोपिता शुद्धिमतः प्रजाभिः ।
8. *Raghuvaṁśa* III. 22 :
पुपोष वृद्धिं हरिदश्वदीधितेरनुप्रवेशादिव बालचन्द्रमाः ।
9 *Śākuntala* Act I, p. 22 : इदानीमेव दुहितरं शकुन्तलामतिथिसत्काराय नियुज्य दैवमस्याः प्रतिकूलं शमयितुं सोमतीर्थं गतः ।

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Chapter XXIII

ARCHITECTURE

There are some references to architecture in the writings of Kālidāsa. It is inevitable that in those days of unique culture and prosperity, architecture should have attained a high level of efficiency, comfort and elegance. There were lofty palaces with seven storeys.[1]

The houses were embellished with upper storeys (तल्पs), turrets (अट्टs), ramparts (सालs) and quadrangular courtyards (चतुष्कs).[2]

There were वास्तुविधानविदः i.e. those skilled in the ceremony of laying the foundation of a house or temple(प्रतिमागृह) as well as शिल्पिनः or skilled mechanics or builders.[3]

Animals used to be sacrificed to ensure the safety and strength of the foundation and the person who laid the foundation had to observe a fast.[4]

The cities were surrounded by वप्रs (ditches) and सालs or प्राकारs (ramparts). The ditches were deep and inford-

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1. *Meghadūta* I. 63 : या वः काले वहति सलिलोद्गारमुच्चैर्विमाना ।
   „ II. 1 : अभ्रंलिहाग्राः प्रासादाः ।
2. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 11 :
   विशीर्णतल्पाट्टशतो निवेशः पर्यस्तसालः प्रभुणा विना मे ।
   Raghuvaṁśa VI. 67 : नरेन्द्रमार्गाट्ट इव प्रपेदे विवर्णभावं स स भूमिपालः ।
3. „ VI. 38 : तां शिल्पिसंघाः प्रभुणा नियुक्ताः ।
   „ XVI. 39 :
   उपोषितैर्वास्तुविधानविद्भिः (सपर्यां) निर्वर्तयामास रघुप्रवीरः ।
4. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 39 :
   ततः सपर्यां सपशूपहारां पुरः परार्ध्यप्रतिमागृहायाः (निर्वर्तयामास) ।

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able, being full of water, and were surrounded by ramparts.[5]

Marble stone appears to be used extensively for building purposes.[6]

The windows were somewhat oblong in shape. They were called गवाक्षs, i.e., shaped like the eye of a cow.[7] They were also called वातायनs[8], i.e., openings through which the breeze moved; also जालs[9], because as a rule the windows were latticed.

Houses were also provided with raised verandahs (आलिन्द).[10] Sometimes आलिन्द is interpreted as a raised place for sleeping upon, or a terrace.

The entrance of a house was termed प्रतिहारभूमि, the place where the watchman or porter or प्रतिहारी is kept.[11]

Staircases were the usual means in buildings of ascending from a lower storey to a higher storey or descending from higher to lower level.[12]

प्रतिमागृहs or temples were built in a decorative or rich style.[13]

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5. *Kumārasambhava* VI. 38 :
गङ्गास्रोतःपरिक्षिप्तं वप्रान्तर्ज्वलितौषधि ।
बृहन्मणिशिलासालं गुप्तावपि मनोहरम् ॥
6. *Kumārasambhava* XIII. 38 :
दैतेयदन्त्यावलिदन्तघातैः क्षुण्णान्तराः स्फाटिकहर्म्यपङ्क्तीः ।
Meghadūta II. 3 : यस्यां यक्षाः सितमणिमयान्येत्य हर्म्यस्थलानि ।
„ II. 1 : अन्तस्तोयं मणिमयभुवः ।
7. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 7 : आ गवाक्षादलक्तकाङ्कां पदवीं ततान ।
8. „ VII. 8 : तथैव वातायनसंनिकर्षं ययौ ।
9. „ VII. 9 : जालान्तरप्रेषितदृष्टिरन्या ।
10. *Mālavikāgnimitra* Act IV, p. 78 :
समुद्गगृहालिन्दशयित एकाकी आर्यगौतमो दृश्यते ।
11. *Raghuvaṁśa* VI. 31 : नियुक्ता प्रतिहारभूमौ ।
12. *Meghadūta* I. 60 : भङ्गीभक्त्या विरचितवपुः ।
Raghuvaṁśa XIII. 69 :
यानादवातरददूरमहीतलेन मार्गेण भङ्गिरचितस्फटिकेन रामः ।
13. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 39 :
पुरः परार्ध्यप्रतिमागृहायाः (सपर्यां निर्वर्तयामास) ।

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To relieve great heat in summer, धारागृहs, i.e., houses furnished with artificial jets or fountains of water, were constructed.[14]

Houses were decorated by pictures of animals like elephants and of beautiful women portrayed on the walls.[15]

Houses of well-to-do people were painted with white paint (सुधा), hence such houses were called सौधs, i.e., mansions.[16]

We have already referred to गूढमोहनगृहs or वारिविहारगृहs. These appear to be structures built under water for privacy and seclusion.

मन्दुरs or stables for horses are referred to in *Raghuvaṁśa*.[17]

Tents were widely used for temporary accommodation of guests or while travelling for long distances.[18]

Houses of rich persons were endowed with large wells or ponds where lotuses bloomed and the swans sported. They were called वापीs or दीर्घिकाs.[19] So also artificial hillocks (क्रीडापर्वतs) were fashioned as an embellishment to private or public gardens.[20]

The magnificence of residential houses, temples and palaces was commensurate with the prosperity of the country at that time. Kālidāsa earnestly requests the cloud-messenger not to miss the glorious sight of the palatial buildings of Ujjayinī although he (the cloud) would have to take a devious course for that purpose.[21]

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14. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 49 :
शिलाविशेषानधिशय्य निन्युर्धारागृहेष्वाऽऽतपमृद्धिमन्तः ।
Meghadūta I. 61 : नेष्यन्ति त्वां सुरयुवतयो यन्त्रधारागृहत्वम् ।
15. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVI. 16-17.
16. „ XVI. 18.
17. „ XVI. 41.
18. „ V. 63 :
रम्यां रघुप्रतिनिधिः स नवोपकार्यां बाल्यात्परामिव दशां मदनोऽध्युवास ।
19. *Meghadūta* II. 13.
20. „ II. 14.
21. „ I. 27.

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City markets full of valuable commodities have been referred to, indicating that trade was plentiful and prosperous.[22]

Although it is difficult to understand what particular style of architecture was followed in those days, it appears certain that the art of construction (स्थापत्य) had reached a very high level.

22. *Meghadūta* I. 31 A :
दृष्ट्वा यस्यां विपणिरचितान्विद्रुमाणां च भङ्गान्
संलक्ष्यन्ते सलिलनिधयस्तोयमात्रावशेषाः ।
Raghuvaṁśa XIV. 30 : ऋद्धापणं राजपथं स पश्यन् ।

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Chapter XXIV

FURNITURE

Furniture in the modern sense does not figure conspicuously in Kālidāsa's work. Very probably the great intricacy and variety of such articles as at present did not exist in those days, or life in this respect was lived even in the case of the rich and well-to-do on a much more simple pattern. Even to-day the purely oriental style of furniture though equally if not more comfortable than the occidental, has the additional advantage of requiring less space and is distinguished by an elegance and taste all its own.

Chairs were generally known as विष्टर[1]. आसन was the common nomenclature. कनकासन[2] is a golden chair, सिंहासन[3] the royal throne, वेत्रासन[4] a cane chair, धर्मासन[5] the chair of administering justice, गजदन्तासन[6] a chair fashioned of elephant's tusks, कुशपूतं विष्टरम्[7] a seat or chair made holy by spreading कुश grass thereon, भद्रासन[8] a seat to be occupied on auspicious occasions. These were chairs of various kinds intended to be occupied on special occasions. हेमपीठ[9], भद्रपीठ[10], were foot-stools or foot-rests.

मञ्च[11] was somewhat like the modern sofa, शिलापट्टासन[12]

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1. *Raghuvaṁśa* V. 3; *Vikramorvaśīya* Act V, p. 138.
2. *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 28.
3. ,, IV. 4.
4. *Kumārasambhava* VI. 53.
5. *Śākuntala* Act V, p. 154.
6. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVII. 21.
7. ,, VIII. 18.
8. *Kumārasambhava* XII. 20.
9. *Raghuvaṁśa* IV. 84.
10. ,, XVII. 10.
11. *Ṛtusaṁhāra* VI. 10.
12. *Vikramorvaśīya* Act. II. 36.

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a seat fashioned of marble; these were mostly placed in gardens.

दोल[13], a swing, i.e., a moving, oscillating seat suspended by ropes or chains, was much favoured by girls and young ladies. At stated periods in the year there were दोलोत्सव i.e., the festivals of the swing, which were celebrated with great pomp and éclat and provided great enjoyment to those who participated in them. They were sometimes termed नवदोलोत्सव[14]. The चतुरस्रयान[15] was the four-cornered palanquin which is still in vogue in some parts of India. This conveyance is carried on the shoulders of four or sometimes six or eight bearers.

The ancient Indians were very fond of beds improvised of soft and fresh leaves of certain trees or of fragrant flowers.[16]

Persons who were observing a vow (व्रत) or practising austerities (तपस्) used to sleep on a bed made of the कुश grass (कुशशयन).[17]

We have already referred to रथ which although strictly not an article of furniture was a well-known means of conveyance in those days. Karṇiratha was a miniature chariot used by royal ladies.[18] Soft beautiful skins especially of deer were used for seats. अजितरत्न[19], शार्दूलचर्म[20] or tiger skin was widely used by the Yogins for their seats.

विमान[21] or पत्र[22] was an aeroplane which appears to have been in extensive use at that time.

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13. *Raghuvaṁśa* IX. 46.
14. „ IX. 46.
15. „ VI. 10.
16. „ VI. 50.
Kumārasambhava IV. 35.
Vikramorvaśīya II. 12.
17. *Raghuvaṁśa* I. 95
18. „ XIV. 13.
19. „ IV. 65.
20. *Kumārasambhava* III. 44.
21. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIV. 20.
22. „ XV. 48.

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दर्पण or looking glass was a very common article.[23]

Lamps were fed on various kinds of oil. In the cottages of the hermits the इङ्गुदी oil was used for lamps.[24]

चामरs were used as fly-whisks especially by kings as it was supposed to be an insignia of royalty like the छत्र, i.e., umbrella.

We have already referred to tents (उपकार्य), a sort of movable houses or tents made of cloth.[25]

23. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 28.
24. „ XIV. 81.
25. „ V. 41, 63.

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CHAPTER XXV

SOME DEFECTS OF THE POET'S STYLE

(1) Pedantic taint :

I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill.

—*The Deserted Village*
(Oliver Goldsmith)

Any poet, or man of letters, can hardly be expected to rise clean above the literary atmosphere and environments of his time and entirely escape the faults which characterize his colleagues and contemporaries. A pedantic trend of literary style is more or less observable in all Sanskrit poets, except perhaps in the case of the masterly diction of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. Although a modest and highly cultured poet like Kālidāsa was the least expected to indulge in egotistic hobbies, we cannot refrain from quoting a few instances illustrating what may be called a pardonable human foible on the part of the illustrious poet. A passing mention of some faults in his composition need not in the least lessen our respect and admiration for Kālidāsa. His faults are so few that in his own words they merge and completely disappear in the brilliant galaxy of his manifold qualities like the spot on the moon in the latter's resplendent rays.[1] Moreover the poet himself has laid down the universal rule that the policy of the creator is not to fashion a single thing containing all the good qualities in itself.[2]

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1. *Kumārasambhava* I. 3 :
एको हि दोषो गुणसंनिपाते निमज्जतीन्दोः किरणेष्विवाङ्कः ।
2. *Kumārasambhava* III. 28 :
प्रायेण सामग्र्यविधौ गुणानां पराङ्मुखी विश्वसृजः प्रवृत्तिः ।

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What the poet is trying to convey in the verse quoted below is that Sugrīva who was installed in his brother's (Vāli's) place on the throne of Kiṣkindhā was his equal in all respects just as the root भू connotes exactly the same meaning as अस्. Mark the bombastic way of conveying a simple idea.[3] The Mānasa lake is said to be the source of the Śarayū river as अव्यक्त is the cause of बुद्धि. The simile appears to be needlessly cumbrous and pedantic.[4]

At one place the poet says that any one of the four brothers, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata or Śatrughna, was equally able to destroy the demon Lavaṇa, just as an exception sets aside or nullifies a rule. The simile is obviously strained and unnatural.[5]

Another instance of the same kind where Brahmā is praised as being the source of that language (गीः) whose beginning is ओम्, whose utterance is regulated by उदात्त, अनुदात्त and स्वरित accents, whose legitimate and primary use is to perform the Yajñas which result in the acquisition of heaven.[6]

सन्धिs or parts of a plot are five in number, viz. मुख, प्रतिमुख, गर्भ, सावमर्श, उपसंहृति. वृत्तिs or styles of diction are four: कौशिकी (शृङ्गार), भारती (शृङ्गार and other similar sentiments), सात्त्वती (वीर), आरभटी (रौद्र, बीभत्स); रसs or sentiments are nine, viz., शृङ्गार, हास्य, करुण, रौद्र, वीर, भयानक, बीभत्स, अद्भुत, शान्त. रागs

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3. *Raghuvaṁśa* XII. 58:
स हत्वा वालिनं वीरस्तत्पदे चिरकाङ्क्षिते।
धातोः स्थान इवादेशं सुग्रीवं संन्यवेशयत् ॥

4. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIII. 60:
ब्राह्मं सरः कारणमात्मवाचो बुद्धेरिवाव्यक्तमुदाहरन्ति।

5. *Raghuvaṁśa* XV. 7:
यः कश्चन रघूणां हि परमेकः परंतपः।
अपवाद इवोत्सर्गं व्यावर्तयितुमीश्वरः ॥
Kumārasambhava II. 27.
अपवादैरिवोत्सर्गाः कृतव्यावृत्तयः परैः।

6. *Kumārasambhava* II. 12:
उद्घातः प्रणवो यासां न्यायैस्त्रिभिरुदीरणम्।
कर्म यज्ञः फलं स्वर्गस्तासां त्वं प्रभवो गिराम् ॥

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or tunes of music are adapted to the particular sentiments. पुंरागs (male tunes) are used in the case of रौद्र, अद्भुत and वीर; स्त्रीरागs (female tunes) in the case of शृङ्गार, हास्य, करुण; and नपुंसकरागs (neutral tunes) for भयानक, बीभत्स and शान्त. In the compass of one small verse the poet has crowded this diverse sundry knowledge which appears somewhat confusing and incongruous.[7]

(2) **Straining after fantastic and far-fetched effect:**

In one complicated verse[8] रात्रि which is represented to be the co-wife of पूर्वदिक् (eastern quarter) incites चन्द्रमण्डल the orb of the moon coming up at the end of the day, to disclose with a smile in the shape of moonlight (चन्द्रिकास्मितम्) the love secret or the secret parts of the body of the east. How रात्रि (the night) becomes the co-wife of the eastern direction, what love secret the moon is prompted to disclose, it is hard to understand. The commentator Sītārāma is hard put to it to adequately explain this verse. There is a tradition that Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava* ended with the seventh canto and what follows is the composition of some understudy of the great poet. The chief quality of Kālidāsa is his wonderful perspicuity. This intricate and half-baked verse may not perhaps be the handiwork of Kālidāsa.

Quoted below[9] is an instance of the poet's erotic com-

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7. *Kumārasambhava* VII. 91 :
तौ संधिषु व्यञ्जितवृत्तिभेदं रसान्तरेषु प्रतिबद्धरागम् ।
अपश्यतामप्सरसां मुहूर्तं प्रयोगमाद्यं ललिताङ्गहारम् ॥

8. *Kumārasambhava* VIII. 60 :
रुद्धनिर्गमनमा दिनक्षयात् पूर्वदष्टतनु चन्द्रिकास्मितम् ।
एतदुद्विरति चन्द्रमण्डलं दिग्रहस्यमिव रात्रिनोदितम् ॥
(आ दिनक्षयाद् रुद्धनिर्गमनं पूर्वदृष्टतनु चन्द्रमण्डलं रात्रिनोदितं दिग्रहस्यं चन्द्रिकास्मितमुद्विरति ।)

9. *Kumārasambhava* XII. 24 :
दृष्ट्वा सहस्रेण दृशां महेशमभूत्कृतार्थोऽतितरां महेन्द्रः ।
सर्वाङ्गजातं तदथो विरूपमिव प्रियाकोपकरं विवेद ॥

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plex cropping up in an unexpected and inappropriate context. Horripilation is due to many causes such as erotic passion, anger, fear or joy and does not last for more than a few minutes. How can it cause anger and jealousy in the mind of Śacī, who may have ascribed it (horripilation) to illicit passion, although she was miles away from that place?

In some places there is a fondness for tiresome alliteration as in Canto XVIII of *Raghuvaṁśa*[10] where almost all the verses are marred by this defect which considerably detracts from their poetic merit. On the contrary alliterations at the end of each verse in Canto IX of *Raghuvaṁśa* are artistic and very pleasant to the ear.

The word दूती is written, in verse 23 of Canto XIX of *Raghuvaṁśa*[11], as दूति for fear of छन्दोभङ्ग, i.e., for metrical convenience. Mallināth pleads for this grammatical laxity and tries to justify it with the words "अपि माषं मषं कुर्याच्छन्दोभङ्गं त्यजेद्गिराम्". It will be admitted that some linguistic license must necessarily be allowed to poets.

---

10. *Raghuvaṁśa* XVIII. 32:
तस्य प्रभानिर्जितपुष्परागं पौष्यां तिथौ पुष्यमसूत पत्नी ।
तस्मिन्नपुष्यर्क्षुदिते समग्रां पुष्टिं जनाः पुष्य इव द्वितीये ॥

11. *Raghuvaṁśa* XIX. 23 : दूतिकृतमार्गदर्शनः ।

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